LANNING

FOR THE

PEOPLE

BY THE

PEOPLE

BY

J. C. KUMARAPPA

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Shri J. C. Kumarappa, well known exponent of Gandhian economic ideals gives in this book a thought provoking and criticial analysis of the Five Year Plan from a Gandhian point of view.

In about forty articles the different aspects of planning and its approach have been severely criticised by the author in a non-ambiguous way and at times in a scathing manner.

The Author's main contention is that the Five Year Plan has not generated as much enthusiasm as it should have done and it has no clear objective whether the country should move towards capitalistic, communistic, socialistic or Gandhian principles.

The book provides a non-official view of the whole plan and serves a good critique of the plan by giving an altogether other side of the picture, from quite a different angle.

Rs. 3/-

PLANNING BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

(Being a collection of essays on Sarvodaya Planning)

By

J. C. KUMARAPPA

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This pamphlet places before the public a collection of 40 essays by Shri J. C. Kumarappa on the subject of planning for the people.

In many respects the official five year plan has failed to whip up the enthusiasm and elicit the active cooperation of the illiterate masses that form the bulk of the population of our country. Within a short period of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years the Government itself has realised at great cost the woeful shortcomings of the plan and have come forward to amend and alter its main edifice. Full employment for everyone of the citizen was not contemplated at first as a necessary basis and this neglect increased unemployment. The Government is slowly coming round to help the production of khadi and many other village industries products in order to absorb the growing number of the unemployed.

The idea of planning is not novel. The Nationa Planning Committee was set up by Netaji Subhas Bose under the Chairmanship of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru early in 1938. Shri Kumarappa, who was a member of this committee, had to withdraw cooperation from this body, as he insisted on having a clearly enumerated purpose of our planning set before us first. In the absence of such a set goal the labours of any such Committee would be in vain. History has again repeated itself after fourteen years and here we are once more face to face with a National Planning Body which too is drifting in an

unchartered ocean with neither a lighthouse in sight nor a compass to guide or a rudder to direct. Shri Kumarappa has been warning the Planning Commission of the various drawbacks from its very inception. Chapters 1 to 9 that form the first part of this book gives his considered remarks on the various facts of the plan.

The second part of this book consists of six chapters (10 to 15) which deal with the fundamental functions of a Government worth its name and exposes the extravagance indulged in by the present set up.

Part three consists of Chapters 16 to 21. The first article in this part gives a brief idea of the importance of Agriculture and food portfolio and a Constructive plan to be pursued by this Ministry.

Subsequent chapters deal in land and other agrarian questions and also suggests solutions for the crisis. Solving the Food Problem and planning of Agriculture are the two issues that will lead us to prosperity and peace. These points are pointedly brought out in this part.

Part—IV consists of chapters 22 to 28. This deals with the problem of labour, wages, price levels and production the Government on the one side exploits the agriculturists by fixing arbitrary prices for food products. This undermines the very initiative of the agriculturists and hence the degrading situation in agriculture that we witness and that is how the food problem also arises. On the other hand, production of commercial crops are encouraged as they bring in a better return to the agriculturists. The Government also takes interest in these

products as it helps in procuring a liberal amount of foreign exchange.

Part V. consists of chapters 29 to 36 which deal with the industrial policy that has got to be followed. Development of Village Industries alone will save the nation from the dangerous unemployment problem. Unemployment is the root cause of many of the ailments of nations. People of the country should develop a fervour for Swadeshi and self-sufficiency. The consumer must be imbued with an ardent economic patriotism. This is essential for the development of any nation. Public utilities and key industries are to be the concern of the Government and should be run on non-profit basis mainly for the benefit of the public.

Part VI consists of chapters 37 to 40 and this deals with other general subjects as politics, foreign relations, acceptance of aids from other countries, community projects, and our shipping programme.

These articles have appeared in the various issues of the Gram Udyog Partika since 1948.

We acknowledge our indebtedness to Sri M. Vinaik whose devoted labours have made this book possible.

Publisher.

PREFACE

Is this the Dawn at last ?

Pandit Nehru gives expression to many ideas at various times. About four years ago addressing a public meeting at Poona he is reported to have said, "*The freedom we achieved two years ago would be meaningless unless we attain economic self-sufficiency. For that we must begin to produce at least our essential requirements in our own country.*" May we found hope that wisdom has begun to dawn on him after his Government was obliged to devalue the rupee ?

All this reveals a woeful lack of a definite policy at the top. How long will the country drift like this ?

We may add that we should also develop an economic patriotism which will strengthen our spirit of swadeshi.

J. C. Kumarappa.

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PLANNING BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

PART — I

FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

1
THE BASIC DIFFICULTIES

The authors of the Plan are rather taken aback to find the country is not enthused with the idea of building up our economic sector on the lines indicated in the Plan. When we closely examine the reasons for this, the defect is not so much in the Plan itself, as under the circumstances in which it is placed. Basically the trouble lies with our Constitution. There are some main provisions in the Constitution which require amendments before anything tangible can be done.

No Objective

The Constitution itself has not laid down in clear terms what should be the objective towards which the country should move. Be that capitalistic, communistic, socialistic or Gandhian, it should be the function of any plan to implement the ideals indicated by the Constitution. As it is, the whole thing is absolutely vague and the conception of a mixed economy makes confusion worse confounded. The Plan has in it no directive for the people to work towards. It gives all kinds of schemes conflicting with one another. Hence, the people find it difficult to see that the Plan is good for anybody. The capitalistic group finds provisions in it which may not strengthen its security. The socialistic group fears dangers of exploitation. The Communistic groups scan it in vain for any provision towards social justice and the Gandhian group envisages violence and dishonesty. Then how can any one be enthused under such circumstances ?

Control of Servants

Implementation of a Plan demands the loyal, unstinting support of the Government servants. As things are at present the Government servants are the masters. When the servant becomes the master in the house nothing satisfactory to the master could be carried out. The master should have also the power to change his servants at his own will. This we do not have and the servants are there on their own terms for as long as it suits them. True, the Constitution should provide against injustice being meted out to Government servants, but it should not give them complete freedom from control. Even the Ministers are at the present time guided, not by their ideals, but by dictates from their servants. Under the circumstances no Plan can ever fructify.

Lack of Coordination

There is no provision for the plan to run on integrated lines. Where one item clashes with another there is no provision to emphasise any one scheme and give the right of way to the proper one that deserves Government support. Any such emphasis given to particular item is called discriminatory regulation and it is immediately set aside. For instance, we cannot ban mill textiles and handloom goods from competing with khadi in different villages. Neither can we ban flour mills or oil presses from functioning. Nor can we recommend Ghani oil as against Vanaspati. Under these circumstances we find ourselves against a blind wall.

Foreign Trade and Employment

We need to have power to control our foreign trade. Exports of raw materials should be discouraged and

imports of manufactured goods should be discriminated against. Only such things as we are not in a position to manufacture locally and which are absolutely essential, should be allowed to come in from outside. Raw materials should be processed as far as possible in our own country. This will make for employment and relieve poverty. As things are at present our raw materials are being exported under the plea that such exports provide for dollar and sterling exchanges. The common man, and much less the villager, needs no such exchange. It is only the capitalist and the Government to a certain extent that might stand in need of any such. For the sake of these the majority of the people are being victimised.

We ought to follow a programme of self-sufficiency as Gandhiji had indicated. Even countries, which work under centralized, large scale industries, such as Soviet Russia, practise self-sufficiency. Their foreign trade is more or less a Government monopoly while internally they produce practically all their requirements. This programme will also make for world peace. Of course this will be rather inconvenient to capitalistic and imperialistic countries but that is the only course open for under-developed countries such as ours.

Our Resources

Our own resources, in relation to our methods of production, must be properly coordinated. In a country like ours, dependent on the vagaries of the monsoon, it will be folly to take to deep ploughing by tractors and it is still greater folly to use imported power like

petrol. Fundamentally, any nation which works out a plan on this basis is bound to fail in the long run.

Our country is not a meat eating country. Hence such use of mineral power resources will create very many problems. Being a vegetarian country we need milk and therefore we cannot altogether dispense with the cow. What then shall we do with the bull calves? Shall we take to exporting them abroad to meat eating countries?

Similarly, our defence programmes are also tied up to the goodwill and favour of foreign countries by our dependence on mineral power. Even our economic sector will have to depend on foreign goodwill to keep its wheels moving.

Our Culture

We have an ancient culture and tradition from which it will be impossible for us to get away. We may modify them to suit modern conditions but we cannot substitute these entirely by foreign devices. Hence we feel that the Five year Plan, as at present set out, contains great many fundamental errors which make it impossible to draw out the cooperation of the nation. However drafted the plan may be, if it is not closely coordinated with the other factors governing the implementation of the plan, it cannot stand. The sooner we take courage in both of our hands and alter this Plan and set it right the better it will be for the country. We trust there will be no question of prestige in this process and the matter will be taken up immediately with the necessary amendments to the Constitution.

June, 1953.

Gram Udyog Patrika..

2

PLANS OR PROJECTS ?

The Planning Commission, appointed by the Central Government has submitted a "Draft Five Year Plan" to elicit public opinion before finalising it. In the next chapter we are offering our remarks on the document.

At the meeting of the Advisory Board of the Planning Commisson, held in the last week of July, the Vice Chairman took good deal of pains to explain that this plan was no plan ! He told the Board that all that document set out to do was to fit into a present set up a little better method to achieve results. They did not pretend to revolutionise society or put forward standards of value to alter our comfortable way of life at least for the top few.

A cursory glance at the document will immediately prove the validity of this claim. Here is no plan at all. The volume that is placed before us is a series of different projects, some admittedly capitalistic of even blatantly imperialistic, some socialistic with an apology, some with pretentions of being Gandhian and some bordering on the communistic. There is no unity of thought or ideals running consistently through. There are ample signs that each project has yielded to some pressure at various points. Even the resources available have not been appraised satisfactorily.

It is an amazing piece of work disclosing variegated types, stresses and strains brought to bear on the members of the Commission at different times from multifarious quarters.

Any plan, which sets out to give a lead to the nation, must have a definite goal based on a view of life, be it material, moral, social or spiritual. In the absence of any such underlying thought we cannot ever hope to obtain the enthusiastic cooperation of the people which is absolutely essential to implement the plan. All the efforts that have gone into the making of this plan would go in vain if immediate steps are not taken to set right this lack of a purpose in life. We understand that this "Plan" will be placed before the Parliament prior to being finalised. We do hope that this basic lack of purpose will be set right and the whole plan turned in to secure something useful and inspiring. As it stands it is neither fish nor flesh nor good red herring.

August, 1951. *Gram Udyog Patrika.*

3

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PLAN

We offer the following comments on the Draft Outline "Five Year Plan" of the Planning Commission which have been published for gathering public opinion.

Agriculture

The agricultural sector should be divided into two parts : one dealing with the production of mill raw materials such as long staple cotton, jute, tobacco and sugar cane and the other section dealing with the production of food material. Even the expenditure indicated in the schedule does not give any idea as to the amount of finances which go to help these mills as against finance available for strictly pure agriculture. It should

be remembered that the help rendered in research, connected with production of raw material for mills is, in a way, an unseen subsidy to the mills. No account is taken of this help which is hidden away from public notice. Nevertheless, it is real help and to that extent pure agriculture connected with food production is deprived of Governmental help.

Similarly, also a good deal of the expenditure on communications, power, housing etc. are indirect aids to Big Business, and they do not appear on the surface.

No notice has been taken of the depredations caused by wild animals. This is a serious handicap of the farmers. Monkeys, Nilgai, and wild pigs cause a tremendous loss to food production. No plan can be complete without suggesting ways and means of dealing with this problem.

It has been suggested that the Village Councils may be made responsible for crop planning. It is not clear what will be the sanction to enable them to implement the plan. There will always be Vested Interests who may not be controllable. Some farmers would want to take to commercial crops which do not come under procurement and which will be better paying propositions. It seems to us there must be some guiding principle which should make it possible to lay down a definite rule; for instance, if we aim at Regional Self-sufficiency, it would be possible to arrive at what are needed for the locality and distribute that production amongst farmers rateably.

Any surplus should be an ascertained surplus before the procurement officers can lay claim to them. Before

arriving at a surplus, it would be necessary to allow for at least one year's reserve of food grain. At the present state of affairs, this may appear rather high. But unless we make such a definite provision it would never be possible to ward off famines.

Land Utilization must take into consideration certain priorities. Production for export should stand down yielding place to local needs. Similarly, when the needed gur and sugar can be produced from palm trees, there should be no sugar cane cultivated on good soil. Even at the present time, there is a case for transferring sugar cane crops from U. P. and Bihar on the question of efficiency. The sugar Industry has become the spoilt child of the Government. If rationalisation is to be applied to agriculture, this industry will have to be dealt with strictly on its merits. Sugar is not a poor man's food and sugar that is taken in tea and such drinks is not fully assimilated and therefore it is a national waste. This tea drinking habit has created a demand for sugar. In the interests of National Economy many such questions will have to be dealt with from a wholly detached point of view.

As regards Procurement, it must be accompanied by certain conditions :— (1) Receiving of revenue in kind, (2) The farmers should obtain the value of the grain taken in consumer goods. Otherwise the Government takes the grain at their own fixed prices and leaves the farmer in the lurch to find for himself in the black market which land him in a loss.

It is not clear what will be the incentive for the farmers to produce food crops, when they are all the

time attracted by commercial crops which pay heavy dividends.

The Draft Plan does not harness the Military towards food production during their off-duty periods. In India our agricultural seasons are mainly limited to certain months and during those months the men of the forces, who largely come from agricultural families, can be made to produce their requirements. To some extent this is being done even now, but it requires intensification. Incidentally, this will lessen the Government's Military budget, and if the forces are stationed at remote places and the army equipment is used to bring marginal land under cultivation, it will also help in the production of more food.

Landless Labour

A considerable amount of thought and space has been devoted to the question of Industrial Labour, which is barely 1/10th in strength of Landless Labour. Comparatively landless labour has received hardly any help from the public and there is all the more reason that its problems should receive much greater attention. Some of the agricultural labour still live under near–slave conditions and their housing is very insecure.

Irrigation

While grandiose schemes have been put forward for raising big dams and river control, hardly anything has been suggested to meet the ever present problem of soil erosion, top-soil washing off and other local problems connected with wasting of our land resources. Though each item is small, yet the aggregate will be

bigger than all the big schemes put together. There should be innumerable schemes for bunding nallas and hill streams at short intervals. This will not only break the speed of the current but will also gather the silt at short intervals and conserve water and raise the water level. The plan has not taken into consideration the effect of spending the large amounts on the different schemes which will be, for a long time, unproductive. These huge expenditures without corresponding productions will intensify inflation and create maldistribution of wealth.

Transport

An elaborate scheme for laying down roads has been provided. But it would be interesting to note whom these roads benefit. The hard metal road is a menace to the unshod bullock. If the motorist needs that road, it should be provided for out of funds collected from the motorists. Besides, for a distance of about four furlongs on either side of the village, the roads should be tarred or provided with some other hard surface to keep down the dust and the expensive surfacing should also be met from the motorists' fund. Where there are no such hard surface roads near the village, the speed limit must not exceed five miles an hour. One would welcome such a speed limit also in small towns which have not got such hard surface roads. Such rules, if made, should be strictly enforced in the interest of the public health. As it has been already pointed out earlier. The road programmes are also heavily weighted in favour of big Industry.

Civil Aviation

Keen interest is evinced in the development of Civil Aviation. We must remember while we are opening up the country to international air-routes by providing elaborate aerodromes etc. there is also the lurking danger of foreign air attacks. There appears to be no adequate provisions against this danger. Of course, a defence plan may not be made public in a document of this kind, but this important factor should not be over–looked. While we make our schemes it is necessary for us to keep in mind the resources available here. Aviation needs large supplies of petrol which our country does not possess; therefore, an over–development of aviation may land us in a great complications and leave us in the lurch at the critical moment.

Forests

The forest Development has been influenced hither to by a Revenue Policy. In future we should look upon forests as a service department. From this point of view, many things that have hitherto been done and which were accepted as axiomatic will have to be reversed. It is necessary, in the interests of the public, that all timber that leaves the forest should be properly seasoned. There should be a well considered forest plan which will take adequate notice of the minor forest products which form an important source of raw material for many industries of importance.

Industries

As regards large–scale Industries, Private Enterpries is given practically a blank cheque. Even foreign under-

takings are welcome under this plan. This is a dangerous policy. Once Foreign Vested Interests get a footing into our country it will be a superhuman task to get them out. The encouragement of foreign loans is opening the door wide to foreign Imperialism to step in. Even the concession shown to foreign capital to enter into partnership with local effort is brimful of danger. It is stated that we are more or less well advanced in our supply of matches. It is evidently forgotten that a lion's share of this trade is with Wimco which is essentially a foreign monopoly using various financial means to strangle local effort.

We should also view with dissatisfaction the support given by the Government to promote fertilizer factories. The condition precedent for using chemical manure is the availability of a large number of land chemists who will prescribe the proper dosage for every particular piece of land. Applying fertilizers without such precautions will land us in a tremendous catastrophe by running our soil.

The commission has soft-pedalled sugar, rice and Vanaspati mills. These are destroyers of food products. Hence especially under present day circumstances, one would have expected a strong condemnation and if necessary banning of these mills. Considerations of health and nutrition would also have made them advocate a different course. But evidently they were not prepared to face the Vested Interests. All food and drug advertisements should be subject to approval and licensing.

In advocating Cottage Industries, the Commission does not think it necessary to create any barriers on

local import. One would have necessarily argued the prevention of intrusion from outside. It will be necessary to husband the resources of the villagers also to enable them to spend such income as they have on local production, and they should be guarded from temptation from outside. A strong feeling of the Swadeshi Spirit should be inculcated if we desire to resuscitate village industries.

The Commission rightly advocates an adequate purchase policy of the Government to patronise village production.

One of the difficulties met with by the artisans arises out of auctioning of raw materials. For instance reeds from river-beds needed for mats are auctioned out by the Government in consideration of a paltry revenue, leading ultimately to the death of the local mat industry and to the flourshing of the Japanese Mat Trade. Similarly, mud for the potter is often available from a lessee who makes a charge to supply the potter's needs. This also is an obstruction in the way of pottries. Again petty taxes and octroi duties create impediments in the movement of goods. These kinds of obstructions in the way of cottage industries have not received adequate attention.

In dealing with the Housing Problem, the Report confines itself more or less to industrial centres. Such housing should be a legitimate charge on the industries themselves and should be controlled by the Government. This is another of the unseen aids provided by the Government to Big Business.

Education

The report blows hot and cold in the same breathe where a system of education is considered. It has no definite policy or philosophy in recommending a method of education. Education, of all things, must follow a definite course indicating the line of development which the Nation should take up. This chapter deals with Basic Education of the Gandhian type and Secondary Education of the notorious Macaulayan type and advocates an imperialistic type of University Education. All these are recommended without any definite preference. This is how great many of the suggested schemes lack unity of thought.

Political Set up

Every nation evolves its own political set up from its national life. Great Britain, being an Imperialistic nation depending for its prime necessities on its colonies and distant countries, has found it essential to place "Defence", Finance and Foreign Affairs in its cabinet. We have also followed this form blindly. It is a dangerous practice. It may lead our country into imperialistic ways. History is replete with instances of nations that had come to grief by granting too great an importance to the Military which have invariably converted themselves into a ruling caste. We must beware of this danger lurking in our present system. Ours is an agricultural country and its cabinet should disclose in its composition our peaceful intentions. This does not mean there need be no defence. All that is meant is that Defence should be a subordinate department, like say the Police, without cabinet rank. So should also be Finance and Foreign

Affairs. The plan should include in itself an indication of priorities in the political set up also.

When this is done the various portfolios will fall in line according to the role they play and the corrosponding departments will be so organized as to make for efficient working under a functional alignment without coming into conflict with each other and standing in the way of progress and getting into a tangle while working.

General

The early part of the draft outline is rather academic and verbose in the presentation of the subject. One would expect an official document to be terse and concise. The plan itself suffers from a lack of a Philosophy of life. The result is there is no definite policy running through the whole scheme. In many places, it appears like a patch-work quilt. But it lacks also a pattern to make it conform with the art of life. Taking all in all the weightage appears to be on Big Business run by private enterprise. On the whole, we may say, like the well known Curate's egg, this plan is good in parts!

August, 1951 *Gram Udyog Patrika.*

4

THE MILITARY AND FOOD SHORTAGE

Since the attainment of independence there appears to be a definite tendency towards increasing armed forces. The recruits to the army are drawn mostly from rural setting. They have frequently been drawn from peasant stock. While at home these young men have been brought up on a frugal diet., may be one meal a day. This starvation level, in itself, has often driven them into

the forces where they are given two 'nastas' and two square meals per day in addition to being introduced to such habits as smoking and perhaps even drinking. In the usual parlance this may be called "raising the stand-andard of living." Such raised standard is maintained at the cost of the public and it also means a greater draft on the existing stock of food grains. Therefore, the mere increase in the forces would mean a shortage of foods as the consumption increases.

On the other hand, these recruits, while they were on the farm, would have been producers and in so far as they have run away from production it is a strain on our food supply. Thus we see increasing the armed forces means decreasing in the productive forces and a strain on the existing supplies.

Rich countries have been able to maintain large armies by drawing on the supply of other countries even to the danger of starvation and famine in the supply countries, but India is not in a position to command such resources. Hence she has to pay through the nose for imports of food stuff to make the shortage caused by increase in armed forces.

Thus armed forces are largely parasitic in relation to food. If we wish to check this to any extent it will be necessary to draft in their man power into our food production. A good deal of the energy and time of the military forces are non-productive, if not destructive. Their energies during peace time could well be channeled into production of food though it may not be possible to completely make up the shortage caused by armed forces. Such an effort will at least ameliorate the evil.

During the foreign rule the officers preferred to stay in big cities in specially constructed cantonments. Now there is no reason why such sites should be occupied. Army units may well be stationed away from the civil population, in cultivable waste-lands and with the enormous resources and engineering skill at their disposal they could be made to bring in cultivable waste under the plough. It may be possible for them to grow most of their requirements by way of food grains and vegetables.

This method of occupying the armed forces during certain seasons of the year has many advantages. It relieves the housing problem, as the houses in cantonments will be available to the civil population. It will enable the young men in the army to be trained in up-to-date agricultural practices, as the military forces can be properly staffed and the young men in the army who are probably potential farmers will be made manure-minded and better-seed-minded. These two defects in our conservative farmers can be corrected. Above all, a certain amount of the food shortage could be made up. Perhaps, if justification were possible, some part of the increase in military expenses could even be justified if these forces take no production without making undue inroads on the existing stock of food materials. We hope, therefore, that the military authorities will be agreeable to such an agricultural spare time occupation being given to their men and in co-operation with the Agricultural Department be able to some extent defend the country against the great enemy starvation.

March, 1949. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

5

OUR ADMINISTRATION

Unknowingly the Planning Commission has rendered the nation a great service. They had invited Sir A. D. Gorwalla, an experienced administrator, to study and suggest measures for improvements in Public Administration. The report that has been submitted is a valuable document.

Lack of Character

It discloses a strong feeling of public lack of confidence in the integrity of those in high places—Ministers, Legislators and officials. The allegations are in the form of. patronage, undue interference and actual corruption. It is believed that the removal of the influence of Gandhiji from the political field has led to a moral decline. " The standard of conduct imposed by Gandhiji was so high that the bulk of his followers could not lift themselves up to it, with the result that their acceptance of his doctrine was superficial. Moved by his personality they became fired with emotion and followed his lead. Emotion, however, is transitory, and when it dies down, leaves its subject morally, exactly where he was before he felt it. It does not impose upon him that deep discipline which, permeating the mind, burns away all dross. Hence, with the success of the movement, in many of its prominent followers there remained nothing but the original man more especially when enthroned in power and endowed with moral phrases, in a number of instances, acted according to his nature rather than according to the tenets he had ostensibly accepted when emotionally inspired by his great master."

"There seems little doubt that greater moral discipline is a pre-requisite for the advancement of the nation. This discipline must premeate from the core to the essential parts. Emotion can never be a substitute for discipline and at the present time even that fire is not burning very brightly."

"The deviation from moral standard of Ministers, Legislators and Administrators takes various forms. These can be classified under three main heads: corruption, patronage (based on communalism, sectarianism, nepotism) and influence. Whatever the form there can be no doubt that it vitiates policy, weakens administration and undermines public confidence."

"During the past few years there have been various instances in which grave allegations of a specific nature have been made by responsible parties against persons occupying the position of Ministers of Governments. Such allegations have on occasion been the subject of debates in the Legislatures. The Ministry as a whole and the party which has put it in power having thrown their weight behind the Minister complained against, the debates have either been inconclusive or have ended in a vote in his favour. Thereafter, the matter has generally been ended. Enquiries into the allegations have sometimes been made by senior all–India leaders of the Principal political party, occasionally their reports have been made public, but often they had remained secret. Some of the reports have exculpated those complained against and some have, in effect, condemned them. In any case, no action has been taken. It is not surprising that when grave allegations by responsible parties are made against

people holding positions of high authority and they continue to remain in power without being cleared of the accusations, the public generally feel that anybody really influential can get away with anything. It seems fairly clear that if the public are to have confidence that moral standards do prevail in high places, arrangements must be made that no one, however highly placed, is immune from enquiry if allegations against him are made by responsible parties and a prima facie case exists."

"The only real remedy for this state of affairs lies in raising the calibre of the Legislator, the sense of responsibility of the Minister and the character of the officer. The first two again really depend on the selection of candidates by the political parties, for it is from these candidates that the legislators will be elected and from the legislators the Ministers will be chosen.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that men of character, capable of disinterested approach to problems and of deciding matters on merits, even against themselves, should be selected as candidates. It is true that such men are not often prominent in political life. They are to be found among the followers rather than the leaders, but the future of the country depends on how large a proportion of our new M. L. A. s and M. P. s belong to this class. It is for the Parliamentary Boards to make a real effort to select, as far as possible, only such people."

Lack Of Vision

While dealing with the administration he states that a welfare state must have as its basis the economic well-being of the people. "No Government, least of all the

Government of India, at the present juncture, can afford to proceed on the basis that it is better to attempt many things than to achieve a few. If it does so attempt, it must dissipate its energies and resources to little purpose. The basic things are food, clothing, shelter. It is not suggested that Government should abjure all other activities until these objectives are fully gained, but it does seem that to day, after providing for the legitimate requirements of external and internal security, the most important task of Government is that which falls within the economic sphere."

As an example of lack of clarity in objectives and vacillation he cites the case of the cloth policy and methods adopted by Government of India in recent months regarding it "as a monument to misinformation and vacillation. Prices are increased, modified within a short time and raised again a few days latter. Goods are permitted to be sold for export and then exports are curtailed. To be able to respond to changing situations is certainly desirable, but flexibility does not mean allowing the situation to get the better of the one through lack of knowledge and determination, and having continuously to shift one's ground."

"There is little doubt that the handling of cloth control, for instance, typifies all the points that should be avoided in any control. Lack of planning, continuous shifts in policy, incapacity for independent thought, inability to withstand pressure and influence, these are pointed out as some of the defects in the Industry and Supply Department's management.'

Lack of Methodical Dealings

There is a great deal of mal-administration due to a want of systematic relationship between three parties, Ministers, Legislators and Government Servants. The report goes into a vast amount of details suggesting ways and means of setting the machinery right. The reader need not be burdened with these at this stage.

We must congratulate Sri Gorwalla for the courageous way in which he has stated his opinions and the straightforward suggestions he has offered. We trust this report will not be relegated to a pigeon hole, as many others have been, but that the Government will take it all in good spirit and amend their ways in the interests of the nation. We have to thank the Planning Commission for this excellent and much needed study and report.

September, 1951. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

6

LACK OF ANY POLICY

The sheet anchor of any Government is a definite policy, preferably one based on a philosophy of life. This basic need seems to be completely lacking in our present Government. The result is a "Policy of drift" —drifting from one blunder to another. In most countries a major mishandling of a situation would call for a change in the Government. But we, being blessed with a Prime Minister who commands popularity, especially with an influential section, flounder on from one major disaster to another, without much effect on the Government. This is a serious disadvantage to any country. Such

popular persons should be in the opposition to command respect with the administrators and not be the instrument for white-washing the scandal occasioned by bad administration.

At the moment we are faced with famine conditions in Cooch Behar and Bihar. News come of police firing in Cooch Behar and hunger marches in Bihar. The situation is serious. It has not come on suddenly. We have had repeated warnings now for several years. Our inefficient administration has followed an ostrich policy of shutting its eyes willfully against facts and stubbornly denying them, nor can we afford to keep these muddle headed men in their jobs. Either the Ministers responsible have been fooled or the officers have been unable to gauge the situation. There is sloppiness in our Government. Such serious mismanagement would ordinarily end in liquidation of the persons involved. If our Government is unable to control our officers with a strong hand they should not dabble in matters they are unfit to handle, and much less white-wash the lack of capacity in their officers by screening their misdeeds.

The food situation is one that has been created by wrong priorities being given. Industrial raw materials are being produced to the exclusion of food inspite of popular protests.

No Government can afford to ignore public opinion all the time, however popular its members may happen to be. We have more than once said that the acts of this Government are leading towards a bloody revolution. It appears as though that day may come sooner than

we anticipated. Will the Government, at least now, take stock of the realities of the crisis and strive to resolve the problem ?

May, 1951. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

Since the above was written similar famine conditions have visited Gorakhpur in U.P. and other provinces.

J. C. K.

7

THE POLICY OF DRIFT

There is a good deal of talk of planning the economic activity of the people. Any planning must take a comprehensive view of the circumstances under which we are working–the needs of the people, the natural resources, facilities available to the meanest and the quantity and quality of the human factor at our disposal. We must have a clear vision of the goal towards which we desire the country to move and we should be able to anticipate the full consequences of our plans in the year to come both on our country and on our neighbours.

The policy of the Government of India enunciated recently is one of expediency and can hardly be called a "Policy". The one concern seemed to be to state something which will silence criticism from all sides — a few words to assure industrialists that their business of accumulating wealth will not be interferred with, an appeal to labour to come to the rescue of the country, a promise to develop cottage industries if no other way is open to produce goods to meet the needs of the people and pious hopes and promises to bring prosperity to all.

This policy of appeasement and drift may act as a pacifier but it will not solve the problems facing us. We need a clear cut policy for the full development of the nation backed by a drive to achive that end. The industrial programme must fit into the general pattern. Our purpose is not mere production for production's sake. We have to meet the needs of the people both for goods and opportunities of full employment. The policy enunciated does not envisage anything that it hopes to serve. In a country living below the subsistence level any schemes of production should give first priority to food and food processing. This means agriculture and agro-industries should have the first place. Here also, taking into consideration the conditions of the farmers and the nature of the lands, the methods suggested should be such as will fall within their reach.

The key industries and centralized organizations should be run to serve the needs of Agriculture and Agro–industries. They will have no purpose in existing unless it be to serve the needs of the people.

The Government proposed to build one million industrial workers' houses. Should this not be the responsibility of the industries that employ this labour ? Why should public funds be used in this scheme ? Is this not a subsidy to these industries ?

The use of the foreign capital and management is contemplated, but the safeguards proposed are not well defined. This problem brings us on dangerous ground and we are not satisfied that sufficient thought has been bestowed on it.

The industrial policy enunciated by the Government does not cover the needs of the nation as a whole. The patronising attitude taken up by the Government towards cottage industries is an insult to the dignity and status of such industries in our economy and proves that the powers that have be got hold of the wrong end of the stick.

July, 1948. *Gram Udyog Patrika.*

8

THE WORLD IS ONE

Constantly we are being told that quick methods of communications have shrunk the world and are making it a single unit rather than a chain consisting of many units. Unity there can be without physical merger. When we say two persons are in complete unity, we do not signify thereby that their bodies are one, but that their higher self, there way of thinking and their spiritual growth coalesce to form one integrated being though their bodies may be separate. World unity need not and cannot come about by making all people of different climes come under one authority and banish their individuality. If we aim at world unity, it will be in certain spheres which will not conduce towards disparity in conditions which will in themselves create discord. If two person's bodies are tied together there will be great discomfort as in the case of the Siamese Twins. There should be complete freedom of bodily movement for hygienic and social reasons; but at the same time there can be unity of thought purpose and action which latter are far more important than the physical oneness.

From the economic approach it is being constantly said that the world is to become one and therefore our economic organisations must merge into one without making any unit self-sufficient. This is a fallacy similar to the claim for physical unity of the Siamese Twin type. The causes for discord in the world are largely due to economic mal-adjustments and ideological differences arising out of this. Therefore, if we aim at world unity, it will be necessary for us to deal with these mal-adjustments and attempt to bring about a co-ordination of effort.

A great deal can be achieved if we can make each nation self-sufficient in primary needs just as every individual in a united organisation has to have individual and physical freedom guaranteed.

In food, clothing and shelter we must remain as far as practicable independent. Otherwise there is likely to be envy, jealousy and hatred generated which will land us ultimately in a world conflagration.

India has been and we hope will always remain an agricultural country which produces all its primary requirements without having to extend the beggar's bowl for its needs. At the present moment there are signs that this organisation is collapsing under false economic theories. India is producing raw materials which cannot have a high priority from the rational approach. At the present time, we are importing a considerable quantity of food grains. For instance paddy, if it has to be transported in bulk to great distances, involves great expense because of the space required and the weight of

its natural covering. To avoid this difficulty paddy is subjected to mill processing which leaves the rice grains in highly polished condition. Polished rice in a country where there is mal-nutrition is a veritable menace. It is pure starch. It lacks the nutritive elements of bran, pericarp, germ and other fats and minerals which have been taken out in the mill processing, and therefore as far as practicable all food materials should be of local production. Other considerations would lead us to the conclusion that materials for clothing and shelter should also be of local production. International trade can only be on luxury articles and cultural materials along with such surpluses in prime necessities which the producing countries can spare.

At a press conference recently held in London Sir Alexander Maxwell, Tobacco Adviser to the Board of Trade stated, "As it is increasingly obvious that we cannot afford to spend more Dollars on tobacco, we are looking to other sources of supply as far as possible." They do not want to ration cigarettes. That habit of smoking has reached such a high pitch in Great Britain that they give it even priority over certain food articles. As a consequence of this, Great Britain is turning to India and attempts are being made by Government supplying seeds to growers to cultivate Virginia tobacco on lands which can grow food.

This will mean that we shall be importing rice and exporting tobacco. This is an unstable equilibrium that no self-respecting nation can tolerate. As long as there is a food shortage in our country the highest

priority for the use of the land must be alloted to the growing of foodstuffs. We hope that the Provincial Governments will take these into consideration when they are approached to place more lands at the disposal of the Imperial Tobacco Company.

Unless a broad outlook, which will bring the interests of the nations together for the betterment of the common man, is taken and an economic organisation is developed to safeguard the supply of the people's primary needs, there can be no world unity purely by organisational methods, such as the U. N. O. or the former League of Nations. Such cannot by themselves bring about unity.

September, 1948. *Gram Udyog Patrika.*

9

COMPLEXION OF FOREIGN TRADE

Our foreign trade is in an unstable equilibrium. We are importing great many intermediate goods so as to manufacture articles which can be exported to bring us more food. This appears a most unsatisfactory position. India ranks as the second largest market of the United Kingdom. She has received more than twice such machinery as has any other country from the United Kingdom and perhaps ranks highest as a purchaser in this regard. In regard to textile machinery India's share was nearly 30 percent of United Kingdom's total export and this represents more than three times the value sent to the next best importer.

We do not object to importing our needs from outside but when we are told by the President of the

All India Organization of Industrial Employers that to balance our import we shall have now to export our manufactured goods, we appear to be on dangerous ground especially if our imports are of food and other primary necessities; because it is these imports that ultimately lead to conflict between nations. The economic complexion of our country is rapidly changing under the national Government and one fears that the change for the worse. A balanced economy should be broad-based in regard to primary necessities. Our production, especially in regard to food and clothing, should not depend much on foreign imports. It is no argument to say that by exporting textile manufactures we can import more food. We have to consider the implications of such a course.

While we welcome the government's effort to grow more food we would point out that even here we have to restrict our dependence on foreign imports such as petroleum, crude oil etc. for tractors and chemical fertilizers, because these again ultimately lead us in an economy where there is danger of international conflict.

The efforts directed towards river management and extension of cultivation into waste lands, etc. are good but at the same time we should make sure that our food lands are not being utilized for commercial uses with a view to exporting such commercial products to obtain cereals. This again is a wrong approach to the problem.

With much of our pasture land gone we have to grow fodder crops for the stall-feeding of cattle. This too is a pressure on cultivable lands that should have priority over commercial crops.

Attempts to conserve our food resources should include banning of rice mills, sugar mills, and vanaspati oil mills which ultimately destroy the nutritive values of the materials we already possess and therefore increasing of any of these type of concerns really goes against the policy of growing more food. We cannot invite people to make a determined effort to create food on the one hand and also support the destruction of food values on the other.

Hence our economic organization requires a properly thought out plan to co-ordinate the various factors of production so as to lead to the welfare of the masses and not necessarily enriching a few materially. The present efforts to industrialize the country with foreign imports and export our manufactures with the idea of enabling us to import more food is economic tight rope dancing which may give the spectators a few moments of exhilaration but may prove disastrous to the performer. Let not our country attempt these tricks.

May, 1948. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

PLANNING BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

PART — II

FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

10

WHY DO WE PAY TAXES ?

All theories of political science hold that the Government is but an agent for the people to enable them to carry on their business in a better way than they themselves can. Therefore, there will be no purpose in keeping up the Government if the pėople can manage better without it.

Taxes are paid to the Government to enable them to function for this particular purpose. The payment of taxes carries with it a hope that the Government will function for the people. On the Government side, on the other hand, the right to collect taxes carries with it an obligation to spend it for the benefit of the tax-payer.

Under the Imperialistic regime, the obligations to the people did not receive due consideration. But now that we have some measure of popular Government, we hope that the Government will begin to serve the interest of the people.

To the farmer the Government should supply water, stop erosion, disseminate weather forecast and render other facilities for the production and distribution of commodities. If plantains are to be grown, if necessary, the Government should have agencies properly arranged to make available sapling to the growers and so all along the line.

In the case of the village industries, Government should also render similar help in production and

distribution and as far as practicable the Government should also become a consumer. Only by these means can the Government help functionally the economic life of the people. If paper is made by villagers, the raw material should be made available and paper as made should also be patronized by the Government offices.

It is for these functions that the people are prepared to share part of their income with the Government. This is really the purpose of public finance.

A Government that does not render these services to the people has no right to collect taxes: nor is there any moral obligation on the citizens to pay taxes. The citizen is entitled to ask what Government has done in return for the taxes he pays.

In many provinces sales tax has been imposed on cottage industry products, while the Government renders no help to them and in preference to such products, uses foreign or mill made goods. When a Government does not use hand made paper and renders no other help in the manufacture of the paper, it can have no right to collect the sales tax on the sale of hand made paper. If it does, it is both immoral and an impediment to the economic life of the people.

Even as regards public services the villages get only a raw deal. The police cluster round the Ministers like flies on dirt but they are never to be found in rural places or small towns to protect the people or to prevent crime. The police are not the paid servants of the Ministers. They are there to protect the public and are paid out of public funds. Their greater duty lies in

serving their true masters—the tax payers—and not in hanging round their colleagues—the Ministers.

We hope with the awakening consciousness of the citizens these required adjustments in a democracy will soon be made and the Government will begin to function as a helper of the people rather than as a parasite on the production of the masses. Until such time as the expenditure of the Government represents the fact that they are conscious of their great responsibilities and are striving to carry them out, it would be but proper to exempt all cottage and village industries from the imposition of sales tax unless the Government feel it their duty to suppress these industries to extinction. In all conscience these have been sponged upon during the British regime. Are we not entitled to relief under a Government run by nationals?

December, 1948 *Gram Udyog Patrika*

11

PORTENTS OF A REVOLUTION

The Britishers have gone but they appear to have left behind them a tradition which has taken deep root in the lives of a few of us. It may mean that some of us had been starved of some barbarous pomp and so it is that we wish to enjoy it by maintaining that system even after the originators had gone. Luxury is a sign of decadence. If increase in quantity and quality of production does not keep pace with the rise in the standard of living it is an unhealthy sign. If consumption shifts towards comfort and luxury while production and producers are shifted, it spells danger. The last condition is

fast asserting itself in our country. The symptoms are best seen in the capital city of New Delhi. The shifting of population from Pakistan to India has enhanced the evil trend, as a large proportion of the new comers are non-producers and consumers of a high order.

A symbol of this splendour at the cost of the poor man at the moment is the great city of Delhi itself. In it the palace of the first citizen is one that will put into shade the pomp of the Great Moghuls. The Viceregal lodge contains about 86 residential State rooms with 56 bath rooms attached. Each one of these State rooms could more or less accommodate a middle class family comfortably, as they are more like flats than single rooms. In olden days when there were no hotels to accommodate distinguished and high born visitors from Great Britain the Viceroy's house did the duty of the hotel as well. There appears to be no reason why we should continue this tradition at a terrific cost to the poor tax-payer.

This palace has a retinue of 312 household servants and 96 sweepers. Their monthly pay roll runs up to Rs. 25000 (3 lakhs a year) while their " poor master ", the Governor-General himself, gets a salary, which if subjected to super-tax and income-tax, will be equivalent to about Rs. 15,000 a month. The maintenance of those gorgeous liveries of the servants calls for another Rs. 40,000 a year.

To maintain a garden in which the Viceregal lodge officials take pride as being "one of the finest gardens in the world" covering about 290 acres, 363 horticulturists and 'Malis' are engaged. This costs over Rs. 3 lakhs a

year. The maintenance of the household costs over 4½ lakhs a year. The Government-General's palace annual repairs come to about Rs. 12 lakhs and repairs to the furniture costs one lakh. The furniture and fittings themselves are valued at Rs. 50 lakhs.

It is not as though this tradition was bequeathed to us. Even during the days of the British Viceroys these extravagances had never reached these heights. In 1938-39 the expenditure on the garden was a little over Rs. 77,000 but today it is about five times that much. Similarly the household establishment expense in 1938-39 was Rs. 1,80,000. Today it is over two and half times that much. Inflation by itself cannot account for the difference.

This picture of India like a beggar in tattered garments with an empty stomach, sporting a carnation in his buttonhole ! We wonder if this incongruity never strikes those who perpetrate it. No doubt, all this is an increase in the standard of living ! The mansion in York Road was not good enough for the Premier who is always talking of increasing our standard of living and he had to move into the palace of the Commander-in-Chief ! The Ministers are vying with each other in giving garden parties, but when we look at the sum total of benefit that they have conferred on the poor John citizen, we could almost say nil, if not worse.

While the high dignitaries are having such luxurious residence, the clerks and others are suffering for lack of even elementary needs. Of course, this might indicate the rapid swelling of the Government departments and there by increasing their inefficiency. The Administration Report

of the state Officer shows that in 1939 there were 6472 residential quarters which had swollen to 15,404 last year. Applications for accommodation had increased from 10,000 in 1939 to over 70,000 in 1948 and the office accommodation from 7,57,000 sq. ft. in 1939 to 56,34,000 sq. ft. in 1948. Does this reflect increase in efficiency of service rendered or disclose a pathological bleating ? We must remember that since 1939 nearly a third of India has gone off into Pakistan. That being so, this terrific increase in the Government staff with increasing complaints of inefficiency can only be considered an unhealthy swelling.

We fear all these signs of the time are reminiscent of the conditions that prevailed towards the close of Czarist Russia. We hope and pray that these do not portend a similar fate awaiting India. Imperial splendour at one end, dire need and poverty at the other is the stuff revolutions are made of. These conditions are increasingly evident in our land. Symptomatic treatment, such as arresting of Communists and Socialists, is not cure for this malady of overgrowth an intense acromegaly in body politic. No shibboleths can heal this, not even "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai" the last resort of our leaders in tight corner. Drastic change in our body politic is indicated. Will our leaders wake up in time to avoid a catastrophe or are we heading on to a violent revolution such as the one that overtook Czarist regime ?

June, 1949

Gram Udyog Patrika

12

LESSONS FROM RUSSIA

Speaking on a cut motion in the Legislative Assembly recently Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister, in the course of his speech defending the obtaining of furniture from Stockholm for the Embassy at Moscow said, "It just is not possible to furnish in Moscow. You get an empty house. We thought of sending things from India, but it was almost physically impossible, unless we spend vast sums over aeroplanes carrying chairs and tables from here ! Of course, it could be furnished alternatively with Russian furniture. The Russian people, and all credit to them for this, ever since this war, are so intent on doing what they consider to be the fundamental things, that they refuse to waste their time on accessories of life. They have to build up their country after the most horrible sufferings and damage they suffered in the war and they are building it up in regard to the major under-takings. They go about in torn clothes and broken down shoes, it does not matter, but they are building dams, reservoirs and factories and the rest which they consider more important. So it is not easy to get any of these small accessories of life for the moment. The result is our Embassy in Moscow had to go to Stockholm for its tables and chairs !

Russia made tremendous sacrifices after the 1917 revolution and built up an economy which was the admiration and wonder of certain types of economic thinkers. After 30 years of forced-pace planning and

repeated stepping up of their production plans we are told Russia is not able to supply even tables and chairs and they have to be content with "torn clothes and broken down shoes"! Why? This is a lesson for India to sit down and think before she takes to the same line of action.

Russia built enormous "dams, reservoirs and factories" after the first world war at a stupendous human cost. Where are they now? Once again they are building "dams, reservoirs and factories." How long are they going to last? Will history repeat itself in another twenty years? The people are now said to be again "going about in torn clothes and broken down shoes." What has been the benefit to the common man of all the sacrifices that have been made? How has the world been benefited? May India draw its lessons?

May we take a lesson from the Russians that they are "intent on doing fundamental things." In India we have not even "clothes" to be "torn" nor "shoes" to be "broken down". Our fundamental thing is food for the very existence. Under these circumstances whether India obtains "tables and chairs from Stockholm" or not is not the thing that will affect the people of the land. One would imagine obtaining food is a greater "fundamental need" but the planning that the Government of India does today ignores this very need and is directing its attention to the frills of life which the Embassies are to the imperialist nations. They are not even "small accessories" to an agricultural country like ours.

February, 1948

Gram Udyog Patrika

13

BULLOCK CARTS NOT ALLOWED

The technique of how the rich exploit the weak was spotlighted at the time of my visit to New Delhi to attend the Planning Commission Advisory Board. The Planning Commission office is located in the South wing of the Rastrapathi Bhavan. From the station I took a tonga and after dropping my luggage at my lodging place asked the driver to proceed to "the Lat Sahib's Mahal" The driver replied "I am a poor man. I shall get into trouble if I drive you there as tongas are not allowed." I assured him I would see him through. He took courage and drove on and went past the two secretariat blocks and was about to turn left to the Viceregal Lodge gates when a sikh young man authoritatively commanded the driver to get off that road. I told him that that was a public highway and I had every right to use it and asked what authority he had to turn me away especially as he was not even in police uniform to regulate traffic and I ordered the tongawalla to proceed. The intruder now climbed down and explained that "Panditji" was to pass that way to preside over the Planning Commission Meeting and he was only clearing the way for him. Then I informed him that I too had to attend that very meeting and what was more I had to be there before Panditji got there so that I could have the privilege of standing up when Panditji enters! Laughing at my retort he allowed the tonga to proceed.

A few yards further, at the forbidding gates, was a military sentry, bayonet, boots, brass buttons all complete.

He stood across the road and ordered us to get outside the railings as tongas were not allowed inside those sacred precincts of the first citizen. I countermanded that order to the tongawalla. The sentry demanded a pass from me. I replied I held no such thing. He told me I could not enter those grounds without a pass. I explained that I had been summoned to attend the Planning Commission Meeting so I had to go.

He replied that he had orders to let the invitees go in but not tongas! I refused to get off and walk the distance. When the altercation was well on, a police officer intervened and brought some reason to bear on the military orders, I was then allowed to pass.

A few yards further the traffic police man also stopped the tonga. On my explaining the situation and strengthening my position by pointing out that at the first entrance he had noticed that a police officer had passed me, he agreed to let us proceed.

The last hurdle was another military sentry; a few yards from the entrance to the office. There too, we were held up till the Planning Commission office attendants rescued us.

In spite of my protest to the Secretary and his subsequent communication with the Military Secretary, this performance was repeated the next day also, when I threatened to arrive the next day — if the meeting continued — in a bullock cart! I pointed out that it was the height of absurdity and absolute lack of planning to hold a meeting at a place to which the members had no free access.

At the afternoon session that day the question of Roads came up. On being invited to offer my remarks I regaled my experience of getting to the meeting in a tonga. I told Panditji that a bullock cart driver in a democracy was as good a citizen as the Prime Minister himself and that it was an insult to deny him the use of a public road as was done in New Delhi in such roads as Ferozeshah Road.

Then Jawaharlalji interrupted to say he fully agreed that every citizen was equal in a democracy and that no privileges could be denied to a bullock cart driver. But he submitted that I had misunderstood the purpose behind the notice board "Bullock carts not allowed". He suggested this restriction was placed in the interest of the bullock cart drivers themselves as those roads were frequented by military lorry drivers and accidents might happen in which the bullock carts would be the worse sufferers.

I replied, " Sir, you are a lawyer used to special pleading but to a simple man like me your argument looks upside down. When there are two persons in public and the presence of one is likely to be a menace to the other, my common sense would lead me to restrain the source of danger rather than the possible victim. Accordingly, I would put up a notice " Motor cars and lorries not allowed " and thus protect the bullock cart drivers !" This evoked a peal of laughter.

This incident shows how even a simple situation is twisted out of recognition to suit the vested interests and the under privileged is told that he is being deprived

of his rights acquired at his own costs in his own interests! This was the old British Trusteeship argument still perpetrated under our "Freedom". When will these frauds on the public cease and citizens be allowed to enjoy the newly acquired rights of full equality and justice?

September, 1951 *Gram Udyog Patrika*

14

CONTROLS

Rationing and controls have played havoc and have helped to create black-markets. Money crops enable the middlemen to export raw materials.

THE TWO TYPES OF CONTROLS

Control of Consumption

Our Government has been blindly following the methods adopted by countries like Great Britain, and that indifferently. They export manufactures and import food materials. In Great Britain all food coming into the country is known and that, when it is divided by the population, give the ration per head. They place their controls at the consumption stage regulating distribution, which is suited to their economy. Thus rationing and control of prices can serve to alleviate the situation in Great Britain.

Control of Production

Ours is an agricultural country that should produce a good deal of the food we need. At best the stock available is but an estimate. In the absence of an inten-

sive production drive, the mere rationing of existing stocks, with an illiterate population, places an undue strain on the distributing mechanism and encourages black-marketing. Our approach should be from the other end. Consumption control will not help us. We have to control production by a proper crop planning. We have to afford facilities for increasing such production, as the country needs. This indicates licensing and regulating production, rather than rationing and doling out existing stocks of food. The Government has not explored this sphere to meet the present situation; nor are they even conscious of it. While the character of the problem in Great Britain admits of placing it under the administrative machinery for solution, situation in our country, on the other hand, calls for technical experts from the Agricultural Department.

Scarcity in consumer goods has called for regulations of some kind to ensure certain measure of social justice. Rationing is still with us. Black-marketing and profiteering seem to be flourishing and the Government is busy with controls. To an on-looker there seems to be something "wrong in the state of Denmark". What that is many people are not able to tell.

Function of Price Control

The mechanism of price has its mainspring in the law of supply and demand. Therefore, any control of commodities and their prices must take the form of regulating the supply and the demand, but there is a complete absence of any attempt to regulate the supply by crop planning and controlling foreign trade.

The present method adopted by the Government to control price, is like setting the clock going by constantly turning the minute hand. What we want is to set the mechanism in proper order, then the clock ought to move on its own. This artificial regulation of price has been largely responsible for black-marketing. The prices have to be regulated automatically, not by a fiat of the Government. The Government has been playing King Canute trying to stop the rising tide of black-markets and profiteering; but the method adopted has been a total failure. In fact great many of the dealers in commodities desire to have the present types of controls on a permanent basis because it provides the opportunity for black-marketing. Corruption in high places has also been interested in permanenting controls. It is high time that these matters are set right.

Control of Prices

If we wish to avoid black-marketing and control the supply and demand in the natural way, rationing will take care of the demand but the supply side has to be regulated in the natural way, not by merely setting up the prices artificially but by controlling the supply. Government can do this by stocking a fair amount of articles that are sought to be controlled and holding them in reserve to be sold at fixed regulated prices, in case the stockists are in the market attempting to sell their articles at a higher price. Of course, Government will not enter into the market as a seller, until the merchants themselves, by their actions, invite the Government to take drastic steps. The Government stocks will be held in godowns merely as a stand by, watching

to see that the merchants do not advance the price unduly. The moment the market price tends to go up, the Government godowns will be opened and the stock dumped on the market to bring down the prices. The Government holdings need not be more than 10 to 15 per cent of the stock required to be able to effectively affect the market. If land revenue is recovered in kind the needed stock will automatically come into Government godowns.

This is not a novel measure. It had been tried out successfully in the working of Bihar Central Relief Committee under private agencies, without the aid of the law or other Government powers, basing our appeal purely on persuasion. Again in finances this is the method used by the Central banks to regulate interest rates, which are but market prices for money. For some unknown reason the Government has not followed this well tried path but have taken to the King Canute method of fixing prices arbitrarily and by so doing driving the commodities underground. It is not too late even now, for the Governments to change over and gradually decontrol the commodities as the market assumes normal conditions. Immediate steps should be taken to relieve the distress of the people who are suffering from the present methods of control.

In Industries

As regards industries, controls are being used indiscriminately and their very purpose is being frustrated.

Where return on capital and profits is the objective of a business as in centralized industries—price control

checks accumulation of wealth and profiteering. On the other hand, in decentralized industries, where the return the artisan gets is a wage, such price control will act as an obstacle on the distribution of wealth. The latter is harmful in a poor country like ours.

Where certain articles are produced both by the centralized methods and by the decentralized, as in the case of oil, price controls may be applied to mill products but not to handmade goods if we follow the fundamental principles of public finance and abstain from restricting the much desired distribution of wealth.

Many Provincial Governments are killing Village Industries by their indiscriminate use of price controls. Practically, they have brought the Ghani oil pressing to the brink of ruin by their control of prices of oil seeds, ghani oil cakes, and oils.

December, 1952 *Gram Udyog Patrika*

15

CO-OPERATION

With the advent of the national Government there is a constant effort to popularise reconstruction work through co-operation. The Governments have been looking upon co-operation as a Special Department attached to the Government machinery and sanctioned by an Act of the Legislature. They have been pinning their faith to Co-operative Societies for credit purposes in the past with dire results both to the Society and its patrons. All these mal-adjustments arise out of a misunderstanding as o what co-operation is. It is not a special type

of organization nor does it get its sanction from an Act of the Legislature. Co-operation understood properly means working together towards a common end. This working together, therefore, must be for mutual benefit and not to satisfy any sense of patronage. This approach is wanting in the present organization of Societies. To take an illustration from weaving the warp and the weft have to co-operate together to make yarn into cloth. Similarly, in the economic life the producer and the consumer have to co-operate together to achieve anything. Unless we find the co-operation it is futile to expect any work of reconstruction to succeed.

What cement or mortar is to the brick in a building that co-operation should be in the economic edifice. Just as the adhesive agent keeps the bricks together and converts them into a solid mass, co-operation will also function to consolidate the social order.

The various organs of our body co-operate together to a common end. If the eyes see, the legs move, we are able to get to our destination, but if each faculty refuses to co-ordinate its work with that of the others we shall be paralysed. In the same way in the body politic and in a community of people each one has to perform his duties not by himself but in co-ordination with the functions of his neighbours.

Thus, we find three functions of co-operation. The warp and the weft function, the cement and the bricks function and the eyes and the legs function i. e. holding together, supporting each other and working together. We often find that these three functions are not performed by organizational co-operation. The Government Co-

operative Department if it is to help the weavers must use the weavers' products. If it is to help paper makers it should use handmade paper and wherever possible it should utilize only products of those artisans whom it wishes to help. A Rural Development Department that uses foreign made brushes, mill made dusters and laminated wood furniture is more a Rural Destruction Department. At present, may be through sheer ignorance, all our Government departments are working on these lines, though in season and out of season they are crying themselves hoarse in an effort to promote co-operation. We hope not only the Government departments, but, also the various institutions and individuals interested in co-operation will take up this wider ideology of co-operation and work and live in such a way as to promote the cause they sponsor. We cannot profess one thing and act in the contrary way. Our actions themselves should declare the philosophy of life we have adopted. Co-operation is not merely a method of work but is primarily a way of life. Therefore, it requires a missionary's zeal and a oneness of purpose to be practised in all its fullness.

It is not merely the things that we produce that matter, however large or fine they may be, but the way we go about it in our attempt to produce the articles is even more important. Hence, it is incumbent on us to watch the means with great deal of vigilance, so that in our anxiety to produce what on the surface appears to be good results, we do not destroy the real thing.

In our country our culture has been one that has been based on co-operation rather than on competition, on joint effort rather than individualistic working.

Unfortunately today we are in a confusion. The West has brought to us the method of working individually with aids given through legalised co-operative organizations.

These may have been useful in a world of competition but are bound to fail where co-operation is looked upon as the essence of life. The standard of life indicated by co-operation would necessarily be comparatively simpler than the standard of living that is possible to a special few under conditions of competition. But it is perfectly certain that the average struck in co-operative living will give to every individual reasonable share in the production of the nation, while competitive economy promises all good things to the strongest. We may say co-operation makes for civilization and social life while competition drives us towards the jungle where the strongest survive at the cost of the weak.

August, 1949 *Gram Udyog Patrika*

PLANNING BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

PART — III

AGRICULTURE AND LAND

A BLUE-PRINT FOR THE MINISTRY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

One of the critical situations that the country had ever faced is before us today. We may well say that perhaps the outcome of this situation may be even more tragic and wider spread than that of the Bengal Famine of 1943. The seriousness of the situation is enhanced by the fact that the persons responsible do not appear to be conscious of the dangerous affair. On the other hand, they seem to shut their eyes deliberately to the facts before them and resent suggestions from the public. They are extremely sensitive of any critical study and recommendations. They wish to be severely left alone to their own machinations, even though the country is in danger of going over the precipice. The officials themselves are more zealous of defending their actions than taking lessons from their failure. In spite of all this, some good may be done by placing before the public a few suggestions which the situation demand.

The portfolio of Food and Agriculture is evidently an unwanted baby in the Cabinet. It is given to any new-comer for lack of any other portfolio, irrespective of the fact whether the incumbent is acquainted with the subject or not and whether he has an aptitude to handle this most important of all portfolios. Gandhiji himself had held the view that this portfolio should be the birth-right of the Premier, as it provides the very sap for the nation's existence. But the powers that be

today, have thought that Pan Supari distributing portfolio of External Affairs, ostensibly to create goodwill among nations, and many others should take precedence over this. It is not too late to hand over Agricultural portfolio to the strongest man in the Cabinet, who has the necessary determination and insight and who can control and co-ordinate all other departments towards a single-minded programme of feeding and clothing the nation. This policy should be entitled to priority over all other considerations.

Unless such an important place is assigned to it, it would be futile to hope to solve this problem by tinkering with it or by organizing nation-wide spectacular stunts.

Within the space at our disposal we cannot give a detailed programme, but merely indicate the broad lines on which the question has to be attacked. We shall take them up under different priorities—immediate, short term and long range programmes.

Immediate :

The most elementary step is to conserve that which nature produces. All mens' actions, which destroy, partly or wholly nature's gifts, should be curbed as being anti-social acts and need to be enforced with a strong hand. Such a programme of conservation will need control of processing of natural products. Under this programme will come the complete banning of rice and flour mills, sugar factories, and hydrogenation plants. These acts of men destroy the nutritive value without adding any assimilative qualities. They also make the

products more expensive and create false values. With food, nutritive value should govern our considerations rather than artificially created so-called aesthetic tastes.

Great attention is due to the methods of preservation, transport and, exchange of the produce. For lack of well built godowns a considerable amount of available food is transferred from the use of man to that of rats and vermin. These two items on the programme should be considered as unpardonable wastes and should be dealt with severely with neither fear nor favour.

In distribution and consumption great care has to be taken to direct food according to the needs of various sections of population. Our country has different sections with their own peculiar needs. The poorer masses depend practically altogether on cereals for their diet. These should be alloted a larger quota of cereals than the upper classes who can supplement their food from other sources such as, milk, meat, fish, eggs, vegetables and fruits, which are altogether above the reach of a good many of the producers. Rationing system in India cannot blindly follow the methods adopted in foreign countries, which are accustomed to a variegated diet of a higher order.

Attempting to change the eating habits of the people radically without creating a necessary background of a knowledge of dietetics, can only make a laughing stock of the persons involved. Given a little time, it may be possible to make those who eat raw rice to take to parboiled rice to prevent the evil effects of polishing. But to ask people to take immediately to eating cotton-seed oil cakes will be to make our schemes ridiculous.

If we are to supplement our present supplies by imports it will be necessary to ear-mark our dollars or foreign exchange for obtaining food and primary needs. Until the threatening famine conditions are averted, our foreign exchange, available at the moment, should not be diverted to obtaining expensive machinery and other costly equipments for large scale production of luxury goods. These items, cited above, will form our 'first-aid.'

Short-term:

We now come to certain steps that may be looked upon as our short-term programme. This will include offering inducement to the producers by not making an undue claim on their production. Procurement schemes should exempt all small producers, who cannot produce more than what will leave them an excess over 16 ozs. per head per day for a cereal based diet. The present procurement plan is extremely oppressive on the small producers and as it operates, the larger producers manage to escape. This directs the excess production into black market and creates a breeding ground for wholesale corruption.

The programme of increasing the military power and the unprecedented influx of displaced persons from Pakistan have increased the pressure from the parasitic sector of the population. This burden can only be lightened by inducing a great many of this sector to become producers. The Military, excepting during manoeuvres or during active operations, should be made to produce bulk of their food needs.

Many of the young recruits hail from rural areas and are acquainted with agricultural processes. They can be switched over to occupy themselves with food production during the agricultural season. This programme will also be useful to introduce improved and modern methods into agriculture. The Military camps may be located on marginal cultivable lands which can be improved by mechanised methods of dealing with such lands thus adding to the extent of soil under cultivation. Similarly, the displaced persons may be given the responsibility of feeding themselves to a great extent and converting themselves into producers rather than remain parasites as middlemen. They should not be permitted to deal in foreign goods, as they are being encouraged to do at present, by providing them with stalls etc. in all big cities.

Very careful combing out of all land under commercial crops must be undertaken. While people are starving there can be no excuse advanced whatsoever towards cultivating money crops such as Virginia Tobacco. Arguments advanced today about the extent of acreage under such crops being small, can hold no water in a famine threatened land.

Long range :

To increase production, great many steps may be taken with a long range programme. To enumerate a few, tanks may be repaired, rivers may be harnessed to exploit every drop of water they carry, erosion may be minimised by a scheme of bunding and tree planting, afforestation may be undertaken and contour bunding may be resorted to.

The present expensive but fruitless agricultural experiments may be directed towards production of improved seeds and supplying these on a large scale to actual cultivators.

The agricultural Colleges with their research sections, should be looked upon as an insurance against famine and food shortage.

The highly paid staff should be conscious of the fact that the responsibility will be theirs for any shortage of food and that they will be readily liquidated if they fail to justify their existence by satisfactorily dealing with any threat of a shortage to the food supply of the people. They should not rest content purely with laboratory experiments or carrying out their field work even on a commercial scale. It should be their duty to see that their findings reach out to the farthest farms in the interior. Our Agricultural Department has to concentrate on their extension work and take upon themselves the duty of seeing that the most illiterate farmers are posted up with the latest achievements of science by a net work of demonstration farms which will carry light and lead throughout the land.

Cattle breeding :

The pivot of all economic activity, especially in the agricultural sector, is the bullock. It is used on the field operations for lifting water, for thrashing and for transport. The cow not only yields milk and provides bullocks, but it also is a fertilizer factory. The dung and the urine of cattle forms to a large extent the main part of the manure that is used to restore soil fertility.

By long period of neglect and during the occupation of our land by the foreign military forces, our cattle wealth has been considerably depleted. The situation requires a strenuous effort on the part of the Government and those interested in the welfare of cattle, are to at least reinstate the quality and numbers of our animals to our former strength.

Agricultural Prices :

One of the commonest slogans that passes current today, both amongst the learned and the unsophisticated is "agriculture does not pay". Agriculture is the one industry that produces wealth. Most of other industries are mainly concerned with transforming materials into consumption goods. If the latter type of industry can be made to pay, there must be some leakage of a serious kind to make an occupation, which produces 50, 60 or hundred fold, a losing one.

One can easily see that the cause of it is the large number of non-producing middle men who act as parasites on this sector and a faulty calculation of prices not based on actual costs at which the products exchange. This state of affairs calls for immediate researches being undertaken to find out the actual cost of agricultural production on the basis other than money and helping the exchange of goods, so that the producers get a square deal.

These few suggestions are not beyond the practicability of the Government of a country which claims to be independent. Any excuse of impracticability of any one of the items above cited will proclaim the

parties concerned as being important and incompetent to carry out the responsibilities of a modern democratic Government. We hope, therefore, that the persons responsible will not throw out any excuses but will put their shoulder to the wheel and bring hope and salvation to our land.

September 1950. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

17

THE ECONOMY OF FREEDOM

Any nation that wishes to be independent has to have an economy based on self-sufficiency in food, clothing and shelter and has to build up a social order that will be self-contained. No independence purely of a political type can ever be lasting, however much of armaments we might build up to back up such independence. We have seen the futility of armaments in the history of Japan, Germany, France and other European countries. Even those countries, which were armed to the teeth, have had to succumb to exigencies, over which they could exercise no control. Hence, it is that economic and social freedom should be the basis for real independence.

Our country is primarily an agricultural country. Here we have to build up an economy that will be sound from the point of view of wealth production to meet the every day needs of the people. Such a programme will involve a careful planning of both our agricultural economy as well as of our rural industries, so that people can have enough to eat and sustain themselves, to clothe them against the weather and provide shelter

over their heads. The growth of food materials themselves should be so planned as to provide each individual with a balanced diet. Similarly, according to our needs, raw materials will have to be planned for clothing, such as cotton and wool, to meet the needs of the bulk of our population. Hence every village will have to have its lands allocated so as to produce raw materials needed to fulfill their primary needs. A survey should be taken of the types of land available and they should be so distributed as to provide them with the needed raw materials.

This planning would involve control of production at the village level. This can be ensured by empowering or organizing village panchayats, giving them power either to licence the various lands for growing crops according to their plan, or to keep the lands under communal ownership and let them out to those who will utilize them according to the plans laid down by the local authorities.

Then, once the products are made available, multi-purpose co-operative societies should be organized to make exchange possible between the villagers themselves. The co-operative societies will now step in to have the articles processed so as to produce consumer goods. If there is any surplus in one village, such surplus can be exchanged for other articles not available in the locality or region. This organization will thus provide the primary needs of the people, will encourage local industries and will give employment to people of the villages in the production and distribution as well as in the processing of the various raw materials.

To help the cultivators to increase, their production to the optimum limit, it is necessary to afford them various facilities. The land itself has to have sufficient manure and irrigation facilities. These can be provided by a drive for making compost out of waste and helping the villagers to undertake anti-erosion work and irrigation projects of their own with the help of such technical skill as Government may give. The processes suggested should be well under the financial capacity of the villagers. The moment schemes are evolved which call for more elaborate technical skill, the planning and execution of the village economy will pass off into the hands outside the village. This will be derogatory to the development of the villages and very often even to their interests.

The growth of money exchange has now brought it to a level where it has become an end in itself. This also has taken away the control of rural economy from the rural population and placed it in the hands of urban interests. If we wish to ensure that the rural economy is to be run by the villages, as far as practicable, we should encourage exchange of goods, that is, a mild form of barter combined with a certain amount of money economy. This alone would keep the production of villages for their benefit and will prevent exploitation of the weak by the strong.

Politically, also, the villagers will get their training in having certain of the public utilities such as marking village roads, looking after anti-erosion schemes, maintenance of tanks, wells and other means of water supply

transferred to them. This will be well organized through adult franchise, build up a practical cabinet based on the co-operation of the villages and their countrymen. In time, such organizations will develop into a training ground for greater responsibilities which will carry some of them up into Taluka level and District level and perhaps later into Provincial spheres and ultimately to the Central Government also. In this way, the rural economy will develop a leadership which will make itself felt in the highest counsels of the nation.

In our country, which is largely an agricultural country, unless we have our political system based on the personnel trained in villages, the outlook of the national policy will not support the interests of the masses of the people. For the development of our rural economy, we must keep in mind the resources available to the villages and base it on organization well within their control. There is a good deal of interest shown to-day in rural development by vested interests, which have advocated methods of development which will not fall within the conditions we have laid down. For instance, the method of tractor cultivation will be one which would call for use of crude oil or other such fuel which will not be available in our villages nor can even India produce these. Therefore, any large dependence on such aids will be fatal to the interests of agriculture. If we are at any time unable to get either these machinery or fuel, it means that our programme of cultivation will fail and bring starvation in its wake.

Similarly, methods of fertilization will have to be suited to the needs of the people. Our country is an

old, over-developed land and therefore, artificial fertilizers if they are to be used, will require constant chemical analysis of the soil. We are unable, at the present time, to provide the trained personnel for this work. That being so, it will not be possible to freely introduce artificial fertilizers to any great extent. It would mean that we have to adopt composting as the basis of re-fertilizing the soil. Besides the dependence on the monsoon for our water supply, makes fertilization a gamble; because we cannot control the quantity of water that is needed. Hence it is that our rural economy should be kept within the possibilities and the reach of the villagers.

There are various other technical departments in which aids would be necessary from governmental organization, such as improvement in seeds, dealing with pests and in the distribution of the products. For this the proper help should come from well directed research from the Agricultural Department. A great deal of our energy to day is being spent in providing aids to production for exchange such as the raw materials for industries rather than production for consumption, such as food-grains, etc. Hence it is necessary for us to divert the activity of our agricultural department on the research level towards food production. Even where the research has been carried out, it has been found that the available knowledge has not reached the cultivator. Hence the organization for dissemination of knowledge that is available should be such as to make the agricultural knowledge reach out to the individual farmer.

Unless we plan our agricultural economy on this basis, it will be difficult for us to meet the food shortage. Similarly, if we do not pay attention to our other needs also on the same basis, it would be difficult for the rural economy to discharge its responsibilities to the country. The development of our economy on this basis is a fundamental proposition before we can be assured of a lasting independence. Our independence has come and to retain that independence, it is necessary for us to give a priority for rural development on these lines.

November and December 1949. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

18

LAND—ITS USE

Land was not used by man until late in his evolution. Prior to that man met his needs by hunting, fishing and other predatory modes of supplying his requirements. His bows and arrows and nets and traps formed his equipments for his existence. He ate what he obtained with his instruments and later clothed himself with the skins and furs of his victims. Trade was not known then. He worked for his own requirements.

When he gave up the nomadic life and took to producing what he wanted, he adopted land as his instrument. Virgin forest and jungle lands had to be cleared and vegetation according to his plan had to be brought into existence. This work called for a considerable preparatory effort. So when one had put in that amount of labour, one felt that one had a right to that piece of land.

This brought in private property in land. Even then each laboured for his own needs. Land was an instrument of production to obtain the materials to feed and clothe oneself.

Based on this structure agro–industries grew up. Even these were largely carried on by the farmer himself during the off season. These occupations provided ample employment throughout the year. Any surplus over and above one's requirements was exchanged for other's surplus. This was the beginning of trade. Both the parties to the transaction gained by the exchange.

At this stage money made its appearance as a means of exchange acting as a convenient token. But this device soon out-grew its original legitimate use and became an end in itself because of the various advantages it possessed as a convenient means of storage of purchasing power, and it soon outstripped other commodities in the demand it created for itself.

Henceforth all other commodities were produced for the purpose of securing money irrespective of their capacity to satisfy human demand. Fanciful demands were created to obtain the custom of the possessors of money. The real demands of common man were ignored in the race for the possession of this coveted means of storing purchasing power.

In this setting all instruments of production lost their position as means of satisfying human need and became instruments in securing money. In this degradation of land also shared. Today it has lost its function of feeding

those who work on it. Both the farmer and landless agricultural workers are among the worst fed and clad, but those who have the money secure the products of the land. This maladjustment is contrary to nature's ordinance and has been brought about by man. Unless this situation is rectified soon, we shall come to grief.

Procurement :

The present Government procurement plans have made matters worse. Money nexus lends itself to the strong exploiting the weak. It screens off real values and misdirects trade and commerce. Government pays for its procurement in money at rates fixed by itself deciding by estimation on the quantities available. Here are the doors to a fourfold exploitation. (1) It takes away from the producer a prime necessity at its own sweet will and pleasure. (2) The quantity is determined without relation to actual facts (3) The payment in money hides real values. We cannot equate the nutritive value of one cup of milk with four cups of tea, though we may try to equate their money prices (4) Production is directed into wrong channels by this programme. A farmer threatened by procurement will sooner produce jute than food grains thus putting land to a misuse and precipitating famine on the population.

Any Procurement system aiming at justice must be founded on barter and should apply only to proved surpluses. If a farmer has surplus grain, which fact is determined after ascertaining all his needs, and if he needs cloth, than the Government should provide the

needed cloth in exchange and not merely content itself to money payment based on the price of grains fixed by itself, leaving the farmer to fend for himself in a black market for his cloth at exhorbitant prices. It is the duty of the Government to secure for the farmer his needs in exchange for what it takes from him.

Production or Prostitution

Directed by the price mechanism the farmer is induced to cultivate things which may have even anti-social values. He may be made to grow materials for mills which cater to the upper classes while the masses stand in need of other commodities. Such utilization of land is a rape of our mother earth whose duty is to feed her children rather than make money.

Our attempts everywhere should be to awaken the farmers to a full realisation of the noble task entrusted to them to feed the nation. Today, enticed away by the money economy, they are allowing the exploitation initiated in the industrial sector to be driven into the agricultural sector without realising that this is a suicidal policy. They should act together to put their lands under the cultivation of articles that will meet their own needs.

From being a granary, land has now become an investment. This change in the status has resulted in tremendous deterioration in the relation of the various factors in this vital function of providing food for the nation. The landlord attempts to squeeze out as large a return on his capital invested as he can leaving the needed land development out of consideration. The

tiller thinks of his annual production only and evinces no further interest in the upkeep of the fertility of the land. The Government is concerned mainly with how much revenue it can suck out of it. The consequences are seen in our present food shortage. There is no short cut to this problem. We have to restore land to its pristine glory and to its place as a feeder of the nation and the various factors should be contributory. Merely importing food grains is no solution.

July 1951. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

19

THE PLIGHT OF OUR PEOPLE

In the last few months I have travelled far and wide within our country meeting thousands of villagers. There is one ubiquitous complaint—food and water scarcity. Wherever one goes, one hears the same tale of woe.

This has been the cry not only of recent times, but for a few years past. The remedies that have been tried have not brought the relief that was sought. We were objecting to all kinds of gifts of nature being converted into commercial commodities. Today water is being bought and sold in many places.

It is usual to debit all these to the vagaries of nature. But man is nothing if he is not capable of wrestling with nature. These conditions are not of recent creation. They have been there always and our forefathers have wrestled with them in the past with all the present day talk of modern methods we seem to be aghast at the phenomenon before us.

In the past water was conserved by creating forests, building tanks, sinking wells and directing water channels to places of low rainfall. We see evidences of their intensive work along our ancient sites of population along river beds like Cauvery, Ganges, etc.

Today many of these places are silted up. In one of the villages I was visiting a few days ago, the tank covers a very wide area, and it was a decade or two ago full of margosa trees. Hundreds of them to the last tree have been mowed down for war purposes. The tank bed is now about 4 or 5 feet higher than what is used to be, being filled up with silt and rubbish. This is only one of the hundreds of cases of man's depredations on nature. Is it any wonder if we are where we are?

As things are the persons who would have been rural leaders have run away to cities to seek their fortunes as circumstances were not conducive to eke out a living in the village under modern economic competitive order introduced from elsewhere. Men of lesser build have not been strong enough to cooperate together to work out their own salvation. The spectacle we witness is the result.

If we can solve the water problem, the food problem will largely solve itself, if it is accompanied by a proper plan of cropping, not giving right of way to commercial crops, as they do under the community project schemes.

In some parts of India it is said that about 95% of the water deposited during the rains finds its way into the ocean. And of the small portion remaining, a great deal of the water collected in these silted tanks, which

are extremely shallow, evaporates in a short time. Therefore our loss is deplorable. The remedy lies in conserving rain water by a planned programme of afforestation, collecting in tanks etc. and deepening the existing tanks.

This programme will give not only work during off season regularly but, also it will help the villagers to help themselves. Today such famine relief as is given takes the form of metalled road making on wages, of about 4 annas a day for woman and 12 annas for man, which can only be described as famine doles. These roads cater largely to the requirements of motor owners. We feel such roads, if built, must be paid for at full normal rates and not at famine rates. One can understand village work being done at concession rates because ultimately the villagers stand to gain. Deepening tanks, digging wells and dredging rivers and canals can all be of this nature. But by no stretch of imagination can tarred roads be considered village work. What I had found in many places could only be described as unconscionable exploitation of the dire needs of the people. What is worse, this work is provided with a feeling of patronage. District Boards and Government departments have to learn the proper spirit in which to serve the villagers. As if these were not enough there is a great deal of mismanagement by middlemen such as contractors. So to the distress of famine and water scarcity is added the tyranny of Government servants.

The silt that is taken out of these tanks could well be spread over dry barren lands to bring them under cultivation. At the present time every village has tank

beds which hardly hold water for more than a few weeks in the year. This is wasteful utilization of our land. They are neither water reservoirs nor cultivable land. They should be one of these two, and properly utilized as such for twelve months of the year. Instead of our huge reservoirs built for generating electricity we could well marshall all the energy that is available in the form of bulldozers to bringing tanks back into use. Merely deepening wells or putting up electric pumps is not going to help us far, if the quantity of water available is not also increased at the same time. As far as I can see, everywhere, the Government programme of dealing with water scarcity, is spasmodic, uncoordinated and ill thought out. The Irrigation Department and those responsible will have to be made to realize their grave duties or dealt with severely because their neglect leads directly to the ruin and death of our population.

July 1953. *Gram Udyog Patrika.*

20

THE PARASITES ON LAND

Since Political power was transferred to our hands we have been trying to make the country as productive as possible. With this end in view various suggestions have been made one of which was to eliminate intermediaries between the State and the cultivator. In some parts of the country there are over ten different types of intermediaries, with varying interests and land holding rights. In the final analysis land must be the common property of Society to feed itself. Therefore, no proprie-

tory right can be recognised in land, much less, such proprietory rights which function as the corresponding factor to investors in the industrial sector.

During the transitional period we may not be able to achieve this ideal of expropriating the owners of land. In the immediate future, however, it will not be unfair to hold that we must treat, at the best, the land owners on the footing of fixed deposit owners, even should we agree to recognise, for the time being, their rights of ownership.

A fixed deposit in a secure bank will carry about $2\frac{1}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ interest per year. At the most this is all that a land owner can claim if he looks upon his land as an investment. The present claims of dividing the produce of the land into equal shares between the land-lord and the tenant makes the return to the land-lord of about $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ net, while out of the balance the cultivator has to meet all his cultivation expenses and also maintain himself. In many cases he is at a loss at the end of the season. This exhorbitant claim of the land owners is creating a considerable amount of ill-feeling in the agrarian population. It will be well, therefore, for the landlords to realise the rising tide of public opinion against them and modify their claims accordingly.

According to our suggestion, therefore, if they are to be placed in the position of investors in the industrial sector, their share should be of the nature of about 10% of gross produce. Any thing in excess of this will make the burden of the cultivator unbearable and does not pay him an adequate return.

This situation is a danger to Society as the motive power of the agrarian labour to work is being undermined. It is in the interests of meeting the problem of food shortage to see that the actual tiller of the soil gets a fair return. The crop sharing contracts and the terms of lease of land have to be looked at from the point of view of public interests and justice. Even now the land owners are unconscious of the injustice. In most parts of the country the danger to cultivation mentioned above is real. It is high time that the Government steps in to meet the emergency created. We trust that with the appointment of a new Minister in charge of Food and Agriculture, things will take a turn for the better and the problem will be tackled at its source.

June 1950. *Gram Udyog Patrika.*

21

ADAPTABILITY

One of the characteristics of mankind is adaptability to environment. The lower orders of creation live and have their being under the conditions ordained by nature. Man alone amongst the creations of nature can, within limits, control his environment. To the extent we are able to do that we could be said to have advanced from the jungle animals. Many of us who are too lazy to find out things for ourselves and who have too much inertia to take an active part, take the easier course of imitating those who have controlled their environment.

With the advent of Swaraj all types of people in India are anxious to mould our surroundings in a way that will

indicate advance in the various walks of life. With the great desire to become rich quickly, we are inclined to imitate the ways of the United States of America, forgetting that the conditions in America are so vastly different from those prevailing in our country. If the Americans have set up a pattern of life and have gone about conditioning nature to fit into this pattern it does not follow that same pattern and the same methods will apply to our country. There is a great deal of effort made from various quarters to import all things American. This tendency may spell ruin to our country, especially in connection with the efforts made to increase production through agriculture.

The conditions of land and land management in America reflect a set of circumstances which do not prevail in our country. The United States has barely 6% of the world's population while it contains about fifth of the crop land of the world. This indicates that America has enough land to be wasteful in their agricultural methods. Their greed to produce more does not take into consideration the loss in fertility of the soil. As soon as land shows any decrease in fertility, they can easily shift on to more productive land. Therefore, they are still at the stage where pioneering conditions prevail. Under such circumstances the recuperative power of the land does not enter so heavily into the equation.

They can afford to ignore land as an organism. Under such circumstances they have taken to mechanization. Of course, they can produce a great deal with mechanical power when calculated on per capita basis.

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In India, on the other hand, our land is considerably limited. It has to feed nearly one fifth of the world in population. Hence we cannot afford to be wasteful in our methods. The recuperative power of land becomes a very important factor in our calculations. When we cultivate a piece of land we are taking certain elements out of it and those elements go to innervate us. The land recuperates itself through various means within a certain time. We have to allow that time as well as rotate the crops grown, so as to fit into the cycle. This is highly technical proposition, as this recuperation conditions the pace of our production from land. If we produce larger crops by more intensive cultivation we shall be reaching the stage of exhaustion sooner, after which the land will become fit only for jungle growth or will remain a desert. Hence it will be necessary for us to draw on our resources with considerable thought.

We may say, in some respects, America is in the position of a rich man's son who draws on his capital in addition to his income for his current requirements. While India is like a self-made person who is to equate his expenditure with his income. Therefore, the rate of production in India has to be well-balanced with the possibilities of the soil conditions. In America they are constantly converting cultivable land into grass land and forests with the depleting fertility, and drawing on better lands by reclamation. Lands that have been dislodged are open to the menace of erosion which washes away the cultivable soil. Because of their constantly drawing on virgin soil, it becomes increasingly important

to use tractors. While they use tractors they also have access to the necessary fuel in their land. If we produce food on the basis of mechanization while the needed fuel for the motive power is not available in India, we shall be in a very precarious condition. Our bullocks would have died out and at a time when fuel-crude oil and kerosene is not available, we shall have to die like flies, as bullocks, for the needed power, cannot be grown overnight.

Our methods have not been suited to the conditions of our country. Our agricultural practices are largely conditioned by the vagaries of the monsoon. In attempting to control this the authorities have tried, in some parts, schemes of irrigation based on power. Where electricity is available cheaply, electric pumps are used for irrigation. The effect of this has been, we have been drawing on a very small fraction, estimated at about 6% while the balance runs waste into the sea; and even out of this 6% the benefit is for the rich. Those who can afford to instal electric pumps draw whatever water is available for their own fields. The poorer sections lose even that which they have, as their own wells and tanks, to which alone they have recourse, dry up as the pumps work. With the advent of the pump the sub-soil water level sinks too deep for the wells and tanks to function. Not only this, but even old trees die out as the sub-soil level riches below the level of their roots. These dried up trees are cut down and the land is exposed to erosion.

The drawing on sub-soil water in this manner may not effect the land in cases like the Gangetic plain and the river deltas which are sometimes even water-lodgged; but in most parts of the country where the water level is already low, it will have a very adverse effect. Conditions in our land, therefore, indicate that what is needed is, not the more intensive exploitation of the sub-soil water, but the conservation of the major part of the water that runs waste into the sea. In other words, more than electric pumps, we require small dams put across streams, rivulets and rivers to hold back some of nature's gift in store. Here is one instance where the much vaunted mechanical aid in the form of electric pump foreshadows ruin and desolation to the countryside.

What we can learn from America is their agricultural practice which is strongly backed by the Government. Their scientists are there to carry on research in a comprehensive way to produce fruits, vegetables, food grains, animals and poultry; while in our country all that the corresponding department does is to produce by mixed breeding immediate results. They have not attempted still the long term practice of breeding up the local stock.

Again, in the land management itself, the American government keeps up the services in contour farming, strip cropping, terracing, sinking tanks, etc; but our government, up to now, has only planned on huge schemes much beyond the capacity of the country to bear and they are still on paper largely. The American scientists emphasise prevention rather then cure. They

are able to forecast the advent of plant diseases and warn people to take preventive measures. We, on the other hand, wait till the crops have been destroyed and dole out remedies which are more expensive than the crop itself.

These instances only show the need for a comprehensive, well-thought-out plan, unrelated to the greed of vested interests, bearing closely on the natural conditions that prevail in our country and which will be within the pattern of life indicated by nature for a tropical country like India, dependent on the monsoon. At present, the schemes that have been put out do not give any signs of having taken such a comprehensive view of our needs. So we must warn our farmers from taking a step in the dark with promises which will prove to be short-lived.

February 1949. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

PRINCIPAL,
GANDHIGRAM.
EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE,

PLANNING BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

PART — IV

LABOUR, WAGES, PRICE LEVELS AND PRODUCTION

22

PRICE LEVELS AND PRODUCTION

There has been, of late, a great deal of talk as to the connection between deflation, controls and production. Dr. Werner Zimmerman, a follower of the late Silvio Gessel, has been in our country a few months ago. He, naturally favoured stabilising present price levels and managing the volume of money in circulation by activating or retarding the rate of circulation by regulating the amount of issue money by an index compass. This idea seems to have fascinated a few amongst us.

It is necessary to understand the background with which Dr. Zimmerman is speaking and the vast difference that would make to our own setting. He is thinking of a highly literate people working under conditions of general industrialization. To some extent these two conditions prevail in our large cities. But on the whole, we have to think of the masses of our people who are practically illiterate and are engaged on agriculture or allied occupations.

Industrial sector is built on money and credit mechanism and by manipulating these delicate nerves of this organization, is possible to control its working within limits. Labour here is also affected by the money wage and is towed along with the fate of industries.

Our agricultural section is largely based on weather conditions and primeaval wants. Whether the prices are high or low, whether interests and rents are attractive

or not, the peasant will plough his land to get his morsel of bread even if it be only to fill his stomach half way. Strictly in an agricultural economy interest and rent should not arise. Such of it as we find is a carry over from the industrial sector. Subsistence farming is what we have in India.

Its economy differs widely from that of agricultural production for exchange as practised in the U. S. A. Canada or Australia. Therefore in subsistance farming, while boarding has a place, banking has none. What our farmer wants is to be able to depend on his purchasing power to carry him from one harvest to another. If buying it will ensure this it will be all the better for him. Interest and rent are aliens to such an economy.

Hence Dr. Zimmerman's schemes will not affect price levels and production in our country especially in the rural parts. What is not efficient to regulate the productivity of about 80% of our people need claim no priority on our attention.

September 1950. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

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PRODUCTION TO WHAT END?

There are certain priorities that govern our national policies. In a truly democratic Government national planning will be directed towards creative effort calculated to ensure the welfare of the general run of the people. This must be so, all the more in a country like ours which has come into the control of its own affairs quite

recently. Unfortunately, whichever way we turn it is the acquisition of Dollar Exchange that seems to mould our foreign trade.

On the Food Front

The country is crying hoarse for food. There is hardly any available land that is not cultivated. Some waste land is being reclaimed. But what use are we making of this land ? Jute and Virgina tobacco are having precedence over paddy and millets. Why ? We are told we can obtain Dollar exchange by exporting jute and tobacco. People can starve or go naked but the Almighty Dollar must be produced at all costs.

On the Industries Front

Unemployment and under-employment stare us on the face on all the sides. Poverty and want exist side by side with skill and capacity to produce. The cry produce more rends the air through the radio. The press and platform have been harnessed into service. A Cottage Industries Board has been organised to help production. All for what ? Not to cater to the needs of the masses but to produce for the foreign market ! Though the Chairman of the Cottage Industries Board is keen to supply local needs the secretariat is loud in advocating organising Emporiums in New York, San Francisco, Los Angles and Sweden. Why this solicitude for the foreigners' demand ? Dollar Exchange !

This magic of Dollar Exchange casts its spell over us because of the Military expansionist programme. We want outmoded guns, cast off destroyers etc.

The Unnatural Response

Jesus asked retorically " What man is there of you, whom if his son asks bread, will he give him a stone ? Or if he asks a fish will he give him a serpent ? Or if he shall ask an egg will he offer him a scorpion ? " Yes, the Government of India, in locoparentis promise to perform all these acts and more also towards their helpless wards because their heart is set on power and prestige based on violence. This way lies destruction.

We trust that the newly appointed National Planning Commission will strive to equate production with local, healthy and constructive consumption and save the country from this downward path which has so demonstrably been proved to have done nobody any good while ushuring in ruin and desolation to all those charmed by its glamour.

May 1950. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

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" ARE ALSO REQUIRED. "

There appears to be a great confusion in the minds of our Ministers. One set of them, connected with the Food Ministry, are going through the Country asking people to ' grow more food '; while another set equally important connected with the Ministry of Agriculture are making the farmers to producc more jute and cotton

for the mills. We are told that we are facing possibilities of a famine in many of our States. Under these conditions, it is a question as to what should have priority — food or money making ?

The question of food will have priority, if the Government means to keep the population alive. But, in a confessedly over populated country like India, famine is one of the known natural methods of reducing the population. It is not clear whether the policy of the Government is to control the population of India with periodic famines ? If that be the case we can well understand the co-ordination between the two sets of ministries — one set calling for 'grow more food' to make the people aware of their solicitude in their welfare while another set, more realistic, giving all kinds of aids and facilities for growing money crops.

In regard to this programme, if it is honestly placed before the people, there should be no confusion. But as it is, people are taking both the items seriously. With the result that they are not able to understand the priorities involved. In the Madras Legislative Assembly, where a question was asked to clear this confusion, the Minister for Agriculture fenced off an honest reply by saying 'jute and cotton are also required'. In practice these are not even "alsoes", because we find the land under jute in Madras has more than doubled in the last three years. This increase naturally presses on food cultivation. Just recently India Government has sent out a programme requiring the different States to increase jute and cotton cultivation. In Bihar alone about a lakh of acres are to be diverted to these crops from food. It is

estimated that such a diversion would result in loss of about 8 lakh maunds of food grains. If we are to judge the Government policy from what is actually being done, there appears only one conclusion clearly before us, and that is, famine may come and take care of the unwanted growth of population while a few left behind can accumulate wealth, cost what it may in human lives. This conclusion seems to us inevitable if we are to judge the situation not from the professions but from the results achieved during the last few years.

It is no wonder that the people are getting exasperated with the way the Government is handling the situation. As far as we can see the feeling of frustration is getting stronger. If the present Government does not mend its way after reading the signs of the times, it may be fast leading the country into an unknown revolution. Scarcity of food has set fire to many peaceful peoples. India can be no exception. Will the Government face the situation and mend its way or let things slide into a crisis ?

March 1951.

Gram Udyog Patrika

25

WORK HARD

In season and out of season our leaders, from the Prime Minister downwards, are never tired of telling the people, of not only our country, but also of Ceylon, Indonesia etc. " to work hard, produce more and increase

the standard of living." This counsel of perfection is becoming so hackneyed that one wonders if the advocates understand the full implication of their advice. Unless this counsel is backed by favourable conditions conducive to its being executed it is a waste of breath.

To work hard people must have inducements. Government itself should set the pace. It should afford facilities to workers to acquire the needed raw materials, tools and other things that are needed. It should render technical aid, it should carry out researches and disseminate the information obtained. In the case of agriculture, it should provide irrigation facilities by helping in sinking wells, providing canals, stopping erosion and arranging for the supply of manure, seeds etc. Working hard cannot mean boxing the air. People must have certain facilities which can only be provided by the State. Has our State done all it can to encourage the people to work hard ?

Even when the people work hard have they a guarantee that they will enjoy the fruit of their labour ? The procurement plan, as it is worked in many States, drives people to resort to underhand ways. The multiplicity of middle men leaves little margin to the worker. Marketing organisations are called for. There is hardly any storage room provided. They have no certainty of getting a just price for their products. In some instances the Government forces the farmers to part with their production in favour of privately owned mills. Are these the ways to induce people to work hard ?

Produce more ! But what ? Virginia tobacco, Sugar-cane for the factories, long staple cotton for textile mills to export their goods, oil seeds for foreign markets and luxury products of cottage industries to earn dollar exchange ? These mean nothing to the half-starved and half-naked masses. What is needed is food, clothing and shelter. Millions of agricultural labourers live on gruel and one poor meal a day, with hardly an adequate lion cloth and live in mud shelters built on other people's land, liable to be evicted any moment. What has the Government done to enable these people, by providing better security, to produce more ? Have they even looked into their economic and social status ? Whatever they produce is appropriated by the landlords and middle men, leaving little or nothing to the worker and often they do not even get the straw for their animals. Should not Government strengthen their position socially ? Only then can they stand erect and produce more. Working hard and producing more needs physical strength and economic encourgement. Under a malnourished condition who can work hard and more ?

While the empty cry goes forth "produce more" Government is busy destroying what is produced. When the earth yields whole-some rice, Government reduces the nutritive value of rice by rice mill. A decade ago Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, the then Dewan of Travancore, banned all rice mills in the State and thousands were earning their living by de-husking rice and providing nutritious food. But just now, after Travancore joined the Indian Union, the Government is raising that ban on rice mills. Is this helping to produce more or

destroying that which we have already got ? When Government follows such policies with what face can they call upon people to produce more ?

What is meant by raising the Standard of Living ? Providing tables and chairs to people accustomed to sit on the floor ? America has the highest standard of living of this type. Are they happy and contented ? They are living in dread of a third world war ? Mere material wealth will not bring real happiness and prosperity.

It is the standard of the human personality that has to be raised and developed. This cannot be achieved by mass scale production. Is our Government helping to promote activity that will afford opportunities for the development of human personality ?

Unless these things are done, and Government actually plays its own part, it is a mockery to ask hungry people to work hard and produce more and the nacked and houseless to raise their standard of living. When will our Government and leaders face grim realities of life ?

July 1950. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

26

EQUALITARIAN SOCIETY

An Equalitarian Society is not built up by any automatic devices. It is a conscious and rational working of any group of people towards a set goal. It will not work on any haphazard methods. It requires a sustained social education to back it up. In the economic field the

principles that are involved are not the same as those that we are accoustomed to in the capitalistic society. Supply and demand are consciously directed and regulated. The price mechanism is used without any speculative element in it to control distribution as well as production of wealth. The price mechanism is not allowed to be affected by considerations of private profit or competition. It is governed by social values. The thing desired is not purely low prices. Consciously the prices may have to be fixed high for purposes of giving reasonable income to particular classes. The cost is not worked out purely on the competitive prices paid for the materials and labour. Labour itself is not taken into the cost of goods from the consideration of competitive low wages.

Wages are fixed from a consideration of what would be required to maintain the producer and his dependents over a period of time which may be, not merely a harvest season or agricultural season or any such short periods, but may even cover the whole year. For instance a pylee of rice at present may cost Rs. 0–12–0, but that price represents probably partial starvation for eight months to the landless labour who produced the rice. In the equalitarian society the landless labour should not only be fed and clothed for the season but throughout the year on a reasonable, satisfactory basis. His food will not be purely rice, water and chillies. It must include what the dietecians require for a balanced diet. If this method of calculating is pursued it would mean, may be, that a pylee of rice may be priced at Rs. 5-0–0 as against our previous Rs. 0–12–0.

The old price is under conditions of exploitation and the present price, though it may appear high, makes for an equalitarian society. Hence, there is a considerable amount of confusion caused by not understanding the ideas and principles that govern a society aiming at equality, and those of society based on self-indulgence.

We may cite here the question of the cost of handloom cloth in Madras. The controversy between the Chief Minister of Madras and the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry has brought out in bold relief the difficulties of carrying on a government without a set purpose or a well defined goal. The Union Minister talks of high cost of handloom cloth and holds a brief for cheap goods, while the Chief Minister enunciates a crucial point of high policy when he declares, 'The question is not a question of yardage, but of human families whose care is the obligation of the State Government and therefore of the Central Government also.'

The care of the welfare of human families will involve the duty of seeing to the equitable distribution of wealth. Maldistribution of wealth is a chronic malady of the capitalist economy. The state capitalism prevailing in Soviet Russia has tried to handle this problem through the price mechanism. Cost, profit or competition do not wholly control the situation. In Russia they decide on the equitable income every person of like ability should have and distribute it over the efficient production of such a person. Supposing a professor or an engineer is given an income of Rs. 300 per month and a skilled *mochi* is considered equal to them in his field, then such a *mochi* also should have an income of Rs. 300

per month. To do this we have to estimate how many shoes he can produce in a month working to his full capacity. If we find he can make 15 pairs, then the price per pair will have to be Rs. 20/- each plus cost. This will mean pushing up the prices which would otherwise prevail on a competitive basis.

Thus if the Madras Chief Minister's idea of the functions of the state were to hold the field, not only will the present prices of handloom cloth be high but they may even have to be pushed up further to give those families an equitable standard of living.

At the moment our Government has no set goal and hence this confusion between the lines of argument pursued by the two Ministers. The Union Minister takes a capitalistic stand while the Madras Chief Minister, in a lucid moment, argues like a good Socialist.

The experiment in Russia proves that in an equalitarian society prices will be high not because of exploitation, but because of better distribution. This means remuneration will also be high all round. The idea that centralized methods of production produce cheap goods on account of their greater efficiency is dashed to the ground. If such goods are low priced it is because of exploitation. With all their efficiency Russian prices are several times higher than what prevail in other similarly placed countries, because labour and skilled work are paid high and very often on the same terms as engineers and other professional workers. Hence if we aim at an equalitarian society based on social justice, we must be prepared for higher prices, but then

when the increase is all round it will only affect the rich, as they are the only ones who will have to pay more while in an equalitarian society they may get less.

In the nature of things it follows that an equalitarian society cannot have an open market with an economy of competition based on exploitation. Hence the iron curtain of Russia.

Thus unless we have a definite goal in view, we shall be working at cross purposes by using common terms which are employed both in the socialist state and under capitalism. The contents of these terms may appear the same while in reality they are not.

It is necessary for us, in India, to understand clearly what our freedom means. If it is freedom to exploit the helpless then we fix low prices in prime necessities. This will bring in a series of famines and distresses of various kinds to the helpless, while it will facilitate indulgence of the over rich. Present conditions in India are clear indications that we are pursuing the non-socialist idea of exploitation. It is time that we took stock of the events of the last few years and set about forming an Equalitarian Society.

November 1952. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

27

MINIMUM WAGES AND DEMOCRACY

For the first time in our country there is an attempt to regulate minimum wages. Although it is now more than two years since the Minimum Wages Act was brought into force, the state governments have not found it possible to implement the provisions of the Act.

From time immemorial our economic organization has followed the policy of safeguarding the minimum wages principle in providing security for the workers. We had always had the *baluta* or *padi* system prevalent all over the country. Under this system, every worker in the village was to get a share of the harvest in the return for which certain services were rendered. For instance, the *mochi* will provide a pair of chappals per year for each member of the village community or a mote to farmer, the barber would shave every man once a week, the carpenter and the blacksmith would keep in repair the agricultural implements. These necessary services entitled them to a share in the production, which kept them from want. Over and above this, if they rendered any further services, they were paid for separately. Thus we see, that the idea underlying this system was to guarantee the minimum annual requirements of a worker.

To fix the minimum wage the government is launching out on a most elaborate survey to find out the condition of the workers. This procedure becomes necessary under the western methods of work and payment. That is not a humanitarian system, but one in which the employer seeks to part with as little as he can out of the total production. Minimum wages calculated on this basis is always a bone of contention. It leads to industrial disputes and ill-feeling, hatred and jealousy between capital and labour. The result is that the labourer strives to give as little as he can and demands as much as he thinks he wants. This system is based on violence.

Our old system of *baluta* is based on a conception of a joint life in a village-everybody sharing in the good things of life as well as realising their own responsibilities to those who are not so well placed in life.

In those days food and clothing represented security. If adequate amounts were forthcoming from the shares in the different crops, an artisan could get even a balanced diet. Therefore, what is called for is to fix the minimum wage at a level so as to assure the animal needs of the worker, which should be calculated on the basis of balanced diet for the whole year, adequate clothing and sufficient shelter. While calculating in this manner the oft–repeated slogan of "capacity to pay" does not arise. If an industry is not capable of paying its workers sufficient to keep their body and soul together on a reasonable standard, that industry can have no claim for existence. If such an industry is indispensable in the national interest, it should be subsidised by the State so as to provide a minimum return of our conception to the workers. Capacity to pay can be factor in our conception to the workers. Capacity to pay can be a factor in our consideration only where bonus is to be paid over and above the minimum wage.

We are glad to notice that the Central Labour Advisory Board, which met lately in Delhi, have decided that the benefit of law should be extended to agricultural labour also by March 1951. This is a logical step, as agriculture is the foundation of all our economic life. It is unthinkable that such a pivotal section of our life should be based on exploitation. To fix minimum wages in organized industries, without regulating the return that the agricultural labour gets, is to build the house upside down. All industries in the final analysis depend on the earth for their raw materials; but today, owing to the prevalence of money economy minimum wages in

centralized industries are fixed, not on the cost of agricultural products, but empirically. The budget of the worker largely consists of the cost of agricultural products and therefore, it is imperative that the cost of agricultural production should be first fixed and wages should be determined afterwards. At the present time there is no data in regard to agricultural costs. Even agricultural labour conditions are hardly known. What is done is to prepare an index of the prices of certain articles in the industrial sector, which are commonly consumed by workers, and thereby determine the price of agricultural products with reference to old price that prevailed during a past year, which is considered as normal. Under such circumstances there is no reality in our computations.

As a consequence of all this, agricultural labour today is practically starved. They get hardly enough nourishment to make up even the energy they expend. In many places all over the country, conditions of near slavery exist. A landless labourer may borrow from his landlord a paltry sum of about Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 and this will bind him to his lender till he repays, which may mean a lifetime slavery. Such a person would get gruel once a day and some clothing at Deepavali, while his wife and children will have to find their way on similar terms, either with the same landlord or elsewhere. In the food they eat there is hardly any nourishment. Hence they have no resistance against diseases and the children grow up emaciated. Can such a population work and produce enough to feed the nation ? The Government is very nervous of attempts made by others to improve the conditions of such people. They fear that making the

labour conscious of its primary needs will affect the procurement plan. Is this a programme to feed the well-to-do at the cost of the producer ? Such a policy is a short sighted one and will not serve its purpose in the long run.

Justice and fairplay, leave alone humanitarian considerations, require that those who produce food should first be fed adequately, and when any surplus is found, that should be available to feed others. This minimum that is to be given to the labourer, should be a first charge and would become the minimum wage. In fixing such there can be no limitations and no outside consideration should deviate us from the right path. Unfortunately, at the present time, both the powers that be and the vested interests in land are literally taking the bread out of the mouths of these helpless millions. Any attempt to ameliorate their conditions is opposed by the government with all their might. About the same time as the Central Labour Advisory Board was deciding to extend to agricultural labour the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, the Magistrate of Madurai Taluka was busy passing a prohibitory order, banning the assemblage of five or more persons in Othakadai Firka. This is calculated to safeguard the interests of landlords and prevent disputes with their tenants regarding the lease and work terms and the eviction of existing tenants.

It is claimed that the order has been passed to maintain public tranquility and to help the grow-more-food campaign. Is the government so ignorant of human psychology that it does not understand that such procedures can only lead to bitterness and division amongst

the village people, which will not be conducive to contentment and consequent better production ? This kind of bungling, without understanding the human aspect of the question, only sows the seeds of a revolution. We hope wiser counsels will prevail.

They tell us "agriculture does not pay". Which industry will pay if the owner draws 50% of the gross yield ? In some places the landlords get up to 75% even. In all organized industries no proprietor even draws on the basis of total turnover or the amount of sales. In the best of industries the gross profit will be hardly ever over 30% and the net profit, after paying all expenses, will be naturally, a fraction of it. Here we see clearly the reason why there is little or nothing left to pay land labour. We have to place agriculture on a business basis. This the absentee landlords are not willing to do. Even the highest government functionary has the audacity to say, "If we work out agricultural costs we cannot have any procurement." As thought hat is a valid reason why agricultural labour should be so low paid and starved. A capitalist says, "If you raise agricultural wages who will come to work in industries ?" So both ways agriculture is hit. If the economically ignorant farmers are shown the anomaly of the situation, Government comes in with a prohibitory order ! Is this our brand of democracy and social justice ?

August 1950.

Gram Udyog Patrika

PLANNING BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

PART — V

INDUSTRIAL POLICY

28

PROFIT SHARING

The Government of India had appointed a Committee to draw up a scheme for sharing the profits of industries between the industrialists and labour. This committee has recommended certain forms of profit sharing to be tried in the first instance in six industries viz., Cotton Textiles, Jute, Steel, Cement, Manufacture of tyres and Cigarettes making.

Our position is that there should be no profits at all in centralised industries. All industries that require centralised form of organization should be worked on a service basis. They should be owned or controlled by Government. Any excess over the cost should be ploughed back into the industry. The employees in such industries should receive adequate salaries and wages which should be on a par with remuneration obtainable for like work in cottage and village industries.

Profit sharing schemes and many of the so called welfare schemes of mills are so much dope to hold their workers in bondage and extract every ounce of energy out of them. Seemingly they benefit the worker monetarily but in the end they create better markets of the mill-products. These enslave the worker rather than liberate him. They are not calculated to develop his personality or individuality.

November 1948.

Gram Udyog Patrika

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WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT

In the House of Lords speaking on the atomic energy the Most Reverend, The Archbishop of York suggested that, "if negotiations between Truman, Attlee and Stalin should fail, then those nations willing to submit to an atomic authority should do so without waiting for Russia and be in a position to confront any potential aggressor with an overwhelming deterrent force". Has His Grace so quickly forgotten the lessons of the last two global wars or does he believe in getting in the blow first? It appears to us that the nations of the world are being blindfolded to the lessons brought home to us by the last two wars that force does not solve the problems between nations. Already people in the know are talking of the third world war. Premier George Drew of Ontario speaking in Toronto early this week said, "We must realise that we are at war today–and let us not baulk at that word. Hundreds of millions of people are being held in slavery and two hundred millions more are under the threat of slavery. There is much talk of the world being divided into two kinds of ideologies, but there never was such a simple division as now—not just of ideology but an irreconcilable difference between two ways of life". Yes, it is the two ways of life that are in conflict today; the one believes in gaining the whole material world for oneself and the other abhors violence even if it be at the cost of renouncing the world.

The people who would gain the world have forgotten that the means of violence even from the materialistic point of view is not worth the candle. Great Britain is squandering about 700 millions on military commitments. The Air Force itself accounts for about 170 millions. The Army clamours for over 500 millions and the Navy ofcourse is the pet boy on whom not enough could be lavished. These figures mean nothing unless they indicate that so much of the productive power of the country is being diverted towards destruction and these figures naturally take no account of the enormous loss of human life.

Unless the nations wake up betimes we shall again be plunged into the cauldron from which there will be no escape this time.

India itself is being dragged into this whirlpool of violence. Our military expenditure in a budget under a national government is soaring high. As far as we can see, the powers that are interested in enriching themselves are extremely busy fomenting the type of industrialisation that will plunge us headlong over the precipice.

The "Industrial Policy" outlined by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru recently gives us no hope that the government are aware of the dangers lurking beneath such a "Policy" statements and actions of government indicate that there is no considered policy in regard to the economic development of the country. The government appears to be guided mainly by the exigencies of the case. Whichever interest happens to be vociferous at the time obtains a promise that will suit the party, irrespec-

tive of the effect on the country as a whole. This programme of drifting along the current will not avail us much. What is wanted is a definite philosophy which will envisage the future of our country and indicate the means of attaining it, and all other considerations must be secondary to this main objective. Given such an objective our country can enunciate a policy which will not only bring peace and stability to our own land but will also usher hope into a world distorted with suspicion and fear.

May 1948. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

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UNEMPLOYMENT AND SWADESHI

The recent A. I. C. C. meeting at Agra is to be congratulated on its resolutions on "Employment" and "Swadeshi". We hope these will be taken seriously and implemented by the Government of which the Congress President is the executive head. Most of the speeches, in and out of the session were full of hackneyed phrases such as "increasing the standard of living", "poverty should be banished", "increase national wealth" and "equitable distribution of wealth". These and such other pious phrases we have heard until we are sick of them. What we want is the bringing of these ideas into fruition.

Jawaharlalji deplores the craving for Government jobs. He suggests the creation of other avenues of employment. This is all to the good and there is nothing original or revolutionary in the suggestion. This is absolutely barren if the needed favourable conditions are not created by the Government of which he is the head.

The Planning Minister, Shri Gulzarilal Nanda's analysis of the causes of unemployment is all too superficial. He deplores the growth of population, he says the Government Development Funds have not been freely spent, he finds the purchasing power in the hands of the people is sparse, he thinks there is not sufficient spirit of small savings, he feels the educational system does not fit the citizen for his occupation and so on and so forth. This is merely an attempt to shift the blame on to minor causes to divert attention from the main ones in which the Government is implicated. Similarly, others have blamed the cessation of war conditions and the advent of Peace !

Common place suggestions are made to rectify matters. Jawaharlalji comes out with the brilliant idea of making the "common man happy and prosperous" and desires a plan for fuller employment. Others want the manpower to be mobilised and cottage and small scale industries to be encouraged. These are all glimpses of self evident truth during lucid moments. How we wish these ideas persist and come into practical life ! Any way, even these periodic ramblings show that these leaders are finding some spare moments from the all absorbing power politics to mediate on the vital problems of John Citizen, but we fail to notice any determined efforts to grapple with the prevailing situation. All these noble sentiments have been expressed since before Dadabhoy Naoroji's time. What shall we do then ? We should give up talking and put our shoulder to the wheel and get on with the job.

If people desire to secure Government jobs it is not because this type of national service has any special call on them, but because it is the most remunerative, secure and least arduous. This is a critical comment which even the Ministers have to face. Are they serving the country or have they found a most profitable employment, banking not on their own services in the past, but on the work done by the Congress Party as a whole, under the inspiration of Gandhiji, in the fight for freedom? Let them prove the former by giving up their Princely modes of life.

Naturally, others are also drawn by such temptations. Are they not also human beings attracted or deflected as the ones at the top?

It is no use preaching to the unfortunate, the dignity of labour. Pay the tanner Rs. 1500/-p. m. and you will find the highest caste people elbowing each other to fill the place. This is one of the functions of the price mechanism operating in our country.

Talking about educated young men going to the villages is absolutely futile, as we have only the prospect of semi-starvation the present lot of landless labour to offer to them. The solution is to raise the prices of agricultural products and eliminate middlemen, so that the returns that the producer gets become attractive.

Without attending to such problems it is nonsense to preach "equitable distribution of wealth" while we ourselves are rolling in salaries of thousands of rupees per month. Are these preachers prepared to practice what they hold out to others?

Under such circumstances to talk of taxes and levies and to threaten printing currency notes to finance the Government is to add insult to injury. The last suggestion shows how short our memory is of our recent dire experience of inflation.

Once when I was speaking at Jubbulpore about the need for Peace, one of the workers of the ammunition factory said "Sir, when the war was on we were drawing good wages, but after this peace was concluded we are not able to get even our daily food ! What is the good of such peace ?" Is this the philosophy that is to guide our land though we do know that other parts of the globe subscribe to this ? This very confession, that War leads to full employment, is a reflection on the violent nature of our economic organization. Our peace time occupations should be held up at a premium by better remunerations being offered. This consideration will indicate again higher prices for the products.

The talk of mobilising manpower is vain unless we put into effect the forces that attract manpower. If you want to gather ants spread some honey. If you want to attract men, opportunity of working with an adequate remuneration must be offered. The spread of mechanised centralized industries with a theory of low prices controlling the market, can only result in repelling man-power, or leaving them unemployed. Men are prepared to sell their very lives if you offer them adequate compensation, as every recruiting sergeant will testify. Hence it is our military budgets, though high, are gladly passed while our industrial wages are low.

Now-a-days we hear a constant cry of 'encourage cottage industries.' What is the use of the cottage industry products when nobody buys them? As things are at present the producer of such products is guaranteed bankruptcy. Cheap products of standardised large scale industries drive out cottage industries from the field. Even exhibitions organized by Government, like the recent Cottage Industries Exhibition at Madras, which are ostensibly organised to popularise and to promote cottage industries, admit in them such competitors as 'Lux Soap', 'Flex Shoes' Mill yarn cloth and celluloid and plastic goods. This is a barefaced hyprocricy calculated to deceive the unsuspecting public.

The remedy

If we really want to promote full employment and prosperity of the people we have to organize a nation-wide programme covering production, distribution and consumption of goods. This will involve our industrial plan, our trade policy and price economy. If we are not prepared to recast these we would be well advised not to waste our breath.

Industrial Plan

The pattern of production has to be such as to employ the largest number, including the educated. It should .be shaped on the fact of non-availability of capital. This will indicate production by means of peasant farming and cottage industries.

Production

Our food situation has largely deteriorated since our farmers took to production of raw material for factories, abandoning subsistence farming. In the industrial sphere, instead of meeting the existing demand the demand is being increased by creation of artificial wants by advertisements. The whole aim of production has become monetary gains and not service. As soon as this outlook developed all attempts of satisfying social standards and values vanished. With this went overboard village and cottage industries and the opportunities for the ordinary citizen to be gainfully occupied shrunk steadily.

The educated formerly employed themselves in such technical industries as the manufacture of Matches, Soap-making, Oil pressing, and extraction of essential oils. These have been displaced by Wimco, Lever Bros., and other large scale oil companies.

A few artisans took to ink making, fountain pen manufacture, mixing paints and varnishes. These are being rapidly ousted by unequal competition from foreign imports. Similarly, a few small industries like the manufacture of sewing machines, electric fans, electric equipment, radios, pottery and ceramics began to shoot up. Now these are rapidly being replaced or crushed by unfair foreign competition. The Government has no active programme to counter these. All that is being done is to abuse the fallen ones roundly for the lack of enterprise ! If the Government is sincere they should have a well defined plan of employment and implement it by subsidies etc. and protect the infant growth from unfair competition from foreign and internal giants.

Distribution

As we had pointed out, our market is flooded out with shoddy and cheap goods from abroad. The Government lacks a well thoughtout trade policy, both for imports and exports. Import of manufactured articles or export of raw materials creates unemployment in our own land. Hence, these have to be banned if the Government is serious about finding gainful occupation for its citizens and not shed crocodile tears over their unhappy lot.

Consumption

No producer can prosper if his own products do not find a ready sale at a price which is profitable to him. The Government is the biggest single purchaser. It should relentlessly follow a rigid swadeshi policy and set an example to the others. At present the purchasing departments buy from the cheapest markets which are mostly foreign large scale goods. This policy contracts our market and kills indigenous producers. Government Departments should be forbidden to buy foreign articles under any pretences where Indian products are available. Cheapness should not be a consideration to divert employment to foreign lands. Ministers should insist on having all supplies from Indian manufactures. At present most Ministers sport a Parker fountain pen, use American cars and their office stationery and equipment is mostly foreign. With such mentality at the very top what hope is there of finding employment for the people ? We have to remember that a discriminating buyer directs

employment. Foreign monopolies like the Wimco should be banned. A spirit of Swadeshi should be engendered in the people by precept and example.

The Government Price Policy should not unduly emphasise cheapness. The first consideration must be to guarantee a price that will ensure an income to the producer that will be adequate to support him.

From the above analysis we conclude that in regard to the creation of unemployment and poverty the first culprit is the Government. If the people are left to themselves, and if the desired environment is provided, and if the price mechanism is so adjusted as to bring in a satisfactory income to maintain a reasonable standard of life, everyone will naturally take to an independent walk of life by pursuing industrial and commercial careers as in the U. S. A. and the U. K. and will not prefer the life of a slave in Government Offices.

Swadeshi

In season and out the people should be educated to support swadeshi. From childhood upwards they should be taught to value human consideration above all. Money value should be regarded as secondary.

All this calls for a proper educational policy. The new elementary education scheme referred to at the A. I. C. C. meeting, pushed forward by the Madras Government with the high sounding slogans, while enunciating unexceptionable educational principles, is a system to make the blind lead the blind. The parents themselves are not educated in the lines in which we want the next generation to grow up. What we require is a proper

Basic Education and not a make-believe. This type of education is absolutely lacking and what is worse even the need for it is not felt.

We trust the praiseworthy resolution of the A.I.C.C. will be implemented soon with the consideration pointed out above being given their proper weightage.

August 1953 *Gram Udyog Patrika*

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UNEMPLOYMENT—A DISEASE

We are constantly hearing discussions about the problem of unemployment from top-ranking leaders right down to students, but hardly any one realises that this problem is really no problem at all. In reality the problem is a disease that should vitally concern each one of us.

Man has several requirements to make his existence possible. The fulfilment of these requirements is part and parcel of his life. When he is engaged in obtaining what are essentials for him he is gainfully occupied. A bird picks up a fruit and eats it. Then in the natural course the seed is deposited elsewhere and that begins the work of planting a new life. The bird is gainfully employed, though unwittingly, both when it picks up the fruit and eats it and also when it deposits the seed. In the same way, in human life whatever we do to fulfil our needs and how we dispose of the results forms what is generally known as work. If there is an absence of such fulfilment or occupation it results in what we call "Unemployment". Unemployment results when we do not get our require-

ments in a cooperative social order by our own efforts. Such fulfilment is not a function of society but it is part of our very being, like breathing. Without it we move towards death. Unemployment is not a problem but a disease. If one overeats and as a consequence suffers from a stomach upset such upset is not a "problem" by itself but a result of our action. There is no separate "Solution" for it. The remedy is simple. Stop overeating and control the palate.

In the final analysis, such a cooperative social order cannot be universal. It can only work within reasonable limits when it is properly organised to produce all that society needs. The more, we obtain our requirements by the efforts of another social order our own chances of living within our society disappear. Thus "employment" gets equated to "a living".

The existence of unemployment indicates that we are not getting our requirements by our own efforts. In simple words we are obtaining our needs from other countries by outside efforts. This is unhealthy. The solution to this situation naturally lies in obtaining our needs in a way which will call for local organisation. This is "Swadeshi". Hence the cure for "unemployment" is the development of a spirit of Swadeshi.

Our country exports large quantities of oilseeds, hides, skins, etc. and then receives back the finally produced articles from these raw materials. Employment is a factor that had been dropped out between the raw materials and the finished product. It lies in our power to insert this and solve the unemployment problem. In other words, we must process our own raw materials and

produce all our requirements. The resuscitation of these two industries alone - oil pressing and tanning - will bring hope and cheer to several millions of oilpressmen and chamars. In this way only we can find real life giving and self-respecting employment for our people and not by giving doles in the form of salaries for work which is not productive. Hence exports of raw materials and imports of finished products are the main factors in creating unemployment. As long as this state of affairs is not tackled it will be in vain to look for " avenues of employment".

Similarly, also when we use " labour saving " machinery, while manpower remains unutilised, we are creating unemployment. It is necessary for us to solve our unemployment problem only through these means. Centralisation of the production of consumer goods indicates that we have departed from the natural course of man finding employment in the simple way of providing his needs.

Our consideration shows that unemployment is a thing of our own misdeeds—a sin. A great deal can be done to cure this social disease of unemployment by the Government organising work in such a way that men are employed in supplying their own needs. Citizens can also help in restricting their purchases to those things only which have been brought into existence by our own people. In short, this implies the promotion of a spirit of swadeshi and the extension of the principle of decentralisation of production. This devil can be exercised only by prayer and fasting, i. e. by right thinking and self control. Let us grapple with this demon at this level with purposeful determination to eradicate it, cost what it may.

Men suffer from various types of diseases brought about by different causes. There are organic disorders like heart disease which may be a problem due to a defective constitution. Then we have fevers etc. like Malaria which may be caused by germs in the body. The treatment of these diseases differ according to the cause that occasion the illness and preventive measures can also be undertaken.

Using this analogy we may say unemployment is a germ borne social evil. The treatment prescribed will depend on the nature of the germs. The usual objective is to exterminate the offending organisms. The social disease under consideration is brought about by three main types of offenders according as we look at the producer, consumer or the distributor.

We have seen that employment is a necessary factor in providing our needs. The needed objective or the goods alone is not the only desired thing socially. Though purely from an economic view that may be construed to be an end in itself. The means adopted is also a social function. Therefore, unemployment may result when we skip one or two of these factors. When a producer resorts to methods outside the capacity of the society concerned to provide, he creates unemployment –as when the whole or the bulk of his products depend on foreign labour or mechanical devices. He is an unemployment creating germ. When a consumer deliberately buys a foreign article he is also an unemployment creating germ. When the Government allows imports of necessities that can be produced in our own country it is functioning as a disease producing germ. These can be prevented or cured.

The remedy may be many sided. In the illustration we had given–viz Malaria–we have to deal with the infection carrying mosquito. We must relentlessly exterminate it with D.D.T. This is preventive. Again we should clean the blood stream of the germs with quinine or other medicines. Hence if the Government is allowing foreign imports to come in and compete with or exclude industries at home or if the Government is giving cheap power to crush labour then the D.D.T. has to be sprayed to put them out of office, or force them to change their policy. If any of the Ministers or officers are offending they should be packed off and the line cleared for better men.

Our diet itself should be rich in protective or disease resisting elements of food. Economic patriotism and a correct understanding of the place of cottage industries is one such.

Education on proper lines is a D.D.T. and instilling of patriotism and a correct view of things is economic food for the consumer. All large scale industries competing with small scale industries by Government supplying them with cheap power are very virulent types which need to be dealt with drastically. Unless we attack this disease ruthlessly we can never grapple with it. We need to have courage. Have we it in sufficient measure and strength ? It is high time we set about it earnestly.

November 1953
&
January 1954

Gram Udyog Patrika

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HAND PRODUCTION OR MILL

The way the Government departments are deciding whether a certain thing should be done by the hand process or be entrusted to the industrialists discloses a dangerous misconception of the principles that should guide such considerations. It is easy from competitive and money considerations to make out that hand production is inefficient, but such considerations are altogether wrong criteria to judge by. Village Industries form part of our life and these cannot be judged apart from the life of the people. We may as well advocate the buying of food from coffee hotels as being cheaper than cooking at home. Home cooking is superior in many respects though it may be apparently costly because of superior materials being used, to those that a commercial person will go in for.

Another commonly boosted up reason for advocating the mill industry is the so-called " efficiency." Even here we may point out that a complete picture is not before those who decide on these things. Recently for instance, the bicycle industry in India was said to be incapable of competing with foreign factories. The local made cycles are manufactured by the best brains in India such as Tatas and Birlas, and it will be a presumption on our part to say that their organization is in any way inferior to the foreign organizations. The real difficulty comes in that the foreign products are buttressed by the

Government which is interested in building up armament factories and maintaining them. Similarly, if our own Government were to adopt cycle factories as a nucleus for our armament production, we have no doubt that our efficiency will also jump up.

In this manner extraneous considerations are allowed to affect our decision and make those, who should be responsible, to pass irresponsible judgements on Village Industries also.

We may cite the instance of handmade paper which is constantly being charged with being more expensive and not readily available.

The fault lies in the lack of proper research and patronage from the Government side. The best of quality of paper can be made by hand, and we may say can only be made by hand. All our University diplomas, High Court stamp paper and currency notes are hand-lifted paper. While the pulp is made by machinery which can well be reduced by bullock power. Hence it is up to us to consider the place of hand made paper in our economy.

The M. P. Government and other provincial bodies are backing the introduction of paper in their territory. A paper mill requires forests of bamboos and other fibrous products to provide the raw materials for their paper making. This will mean denudation of our forest resources. We are not aware that the forest department has taken up this extra load and changed its policy to fit into the requirements of paper mills. Otherwise this support to paper mills spells danger to our land. Already

our forests have been denuded of over 10 years cuttings and the paper mills will be an extra load that the country will hardly bear. Where cheap paper, such as needed for newsprint is necessary, it may be a wiser policy to import them from countries such as Sweden, Norway and Canada which have an over–abundance of forest areas and who can well afford to exploit their forest resources without endangering the economy of the country. Our country is already suffering from lack of rain, erosion and torrential flooding because of an inadequate forest policy. We can ill–afford to be careless in this regard.

On the other hand, hand made paper utilizes our resources to the best advantage. Bamboos are first used for a number of years as raw materials for baskets, chatayis, roofing and other household requirements. Then when they are rotted we use them for paper. Therefore hand made paper making does not make a drain on our available resources. Similary, in case of other raw materials like rags and old jute bags, hand made paper can utilize materials which have already served the needs of man for some time.

Hence in planning our economy we must take into consideration all possibilities by which we can make the best use of raw materials under the conditions prevailing in India. It would appear, therefore, that for newsprints and other cheap paper which can well be prepared by mills, it will be best for us to import from abroad, while higher quality paper should be made out of waste materials available to us in the land. Similarly, in many of the industries unless the Government is definitely set

on building up armament factories, it would be best to utilize hand processes in preference to the mill processes which latter do not fit into our economy where super-abundance of labour is available along with a scarcity of capital. Under such circumstances to plump for largescale industries would be like depending on hot-house plants for our staple food. We trust in the new setting, where we have to re-orient our industrial policy, wiser counsels will prevail.

May 1949 *Gram Udyog Patrika*

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PUTTING THE CLOCK BACK

A news agency report states that Prof. Einstein has sent a message to the people of our land warning us that chemical fertilizers and tractor ploughing will ultimately bring in loss of soil fertility causing incalculable and irreparable harm to the country eventually. Curiously enough the bearer of this message is Dr. Amarnath Jha himself.

Great many experts before Prof. Einstein have advised Western farmers against the use of these instruments of a short sighted policy. Our country is always about a century behind. What has been discarded by Western scientists, our experts cling to as the last word in progress. It would not matter much if our scientists were left to hold their antiquated views in their laboratories, but the tragedy of it is our vested interests have used them for propaganda purposes and have induced our

Government to squander crores of public money on importing tractors and establishing fertilizer factories.

As it is the pressure on land is such that it is not able to provide adequate food for the people. What we need is a programme of rational use of land combined with provision of ample fuel resources to release farm yard manure for the fields. Instead we are faced with converting, what is today a reasonably fertile soil, into desert land by our greed for quiek returns. No doubt the use of fertilizers will stimulate the soil into yielding more for a time but soon, like the energy of the drunkard, it will disappear, making the second state worse than the first. Shall we be guilty of killing the goose that lays the golden egg ?

If it was merely Prof. Einstein's personal view it may be dismissed lightly. This opinion is the result of extensive use of fertilizers and tractors under very favourable conditions both in the U.S.A. and Australia.

We may remind our readers that not long ago Mr. Collin Grant clark, the Australian economist, invited to advise our Government, said that he would develop India on the basis of cottage industries regarding the factory as a necessary evil. Surely these men cannot be accused of being fanatical Gandhites trying to put the clock back ! Shall we heed the call of wisdom based on experience or go our own way to destruction ?

The impact of the West disintegrated our industrial set up. Is it left to a national Government to convert our fields into deserts ? May God forbid.

July 1948

Gram Udyog Patrika.

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DEVELOPMENT OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Since the Congress Government came into power there has been a considerable talk of developing cottage industries. This has been intensified since a Planning Commission is appointed. Persons have been sent out at great public cost to study methods and techniques employed in foreign countries. A few foreign machines and technicians have been imported to demonstrate their methods to us. Such efforts though necessary is not all that needs to be done. Decentralized industries are needed, not only to increase production to improve the economic condition of our country, but they also play a very important role in the social and political spheres. Perhaps the social aspects may even be more important than the economic. The wage that is paid or the earning of the cottage industries worker is a share in the national wealth in terms of food, clothing and shelter which is allotted to such a worker. Therefore, the poverty of our country can be tackled not merely by the extra production of material goods but also by the distribution of the available wealth to the largest number. As we have already said the second aspect is a more important contribution of cottage industries. Centralized large scale industries create social problems and intensify poverty by maldistribution.

Priorities :

Generally speaking all government efforts in this direction are aimed at improving "Cottage Industries". But this term ignores the variety of functions which different types of cottage industries perform. It is an omnibus designation that overlooks the priorities that different types of cottage industries should receive. Each type of cottage industry is functionally different. Village industries are those which are ultimately concerned with the needs of villages. In the main production and consumption take place in the village itself. They are mainly food processing industries and Khadi, which supply the primary needs of the masses. Then there are home industries to supply the domestic needs. Some cottage industries work for the satisfaction of the local demands while others are intended mainly for the export market. This latter may even be called 'Drawing Room' industries. Their chief concern is to furnish curious and comforts for the rich.

All such industries should form a complimentary suppliment to Agriculture. Examples of complimentary industries are dairying, tanning and oil pressing : while spinning, house building, bricks and tile making and well sinking may furnish examples of supplimentary industries.

In additions to these we have to develop crafts which will supply modern demand. For instance the skill of goldsmiths may be canalised into watch making, manufacturing of fountain pens and pencils.

To develop cottage industries it is necessary to minimise the amount of competition and maximise cooperation. We have already indicated that wages and returns of cottage industries are methods of rationing out of the national wealth. Therefore, these items demand the careful scrutiny of those who are interested in the welfare of the masses.

Prices :

In the case of centralized large scale industries, prices are fixed in relation to cost, supply and demand apart from the speculative element. In this sector the item of cost has two important components raw materials and wages. Raw materials are more or less a fixed item among the competitors, while wages may form comparatively, an elastic factor; therefore prices, if lower, press on wages, because of competition and because these industries are mainly concerned with only material production of goods. The social aspects are forgotton except when brought to the fore by the pressure generated by labour unions. In this case the consumers demand low prices without realizing that their requirement will entail lowering the share of the national wealth to the worker. In the case of cottage industries we have to remember that the high price is largely due to living wage being given to large number of workers than in the case of centralized industries. By depriving a large number of people of employment it is sought to give a few people a little larger return. But our social conditions demand increase in the number employed and giving them living wages.

Development :

If cottage industries are to be fostered we have to protect them from foreign imports of manufactured articles and watch our exports of raw materials. This requires a vigilant body of public minded persons who will watch the trend and afford guidance after a careful study.

The Government should have a programme to increase efficiency by organizing better training of artisans and carrying out the researches and processes. They can organize test and offer prizes to competitors in tests carried out in different industries.

Railway freight rates have to be so set out as to promote cottage industries. The present Railway rate policy has been definitely laid down to promote centralized industries. No thought has so far been given to the products of cottage industries.

Where certain processes involve the factor of time, such as in tanning, cooperative methods will have to be introduced. Instead of monetary help the Government can render functional aids by organizing the supply of raw materials, helping to create a demand and preventing competition from large scale industries. The forest policy has been largely based hitherto on a revenue outlook. Service should be the governing factor in all Government departments which should not attempt trade or commerce on a profit motive.

The Government itself being a large spender should look to cottage industries to supply their needs. The present system of tenders has been formed with the back-

ground of a competitive economy. It is necessary to change this outlook. The Government should come forward as a major partner in cottage industries.

Increasing Production :

Middlemen are great many in numbers. They are generally parasitic in nature. We have got to reduce their number and there by increase the return to the producer. The displaced middlemen should be drafted into the productive sector. Similarly, the non-productive elements of society, such as the military, may be organised to produce part of their requirements when off duty. The military personnel may devote two or three months in the year in manufacturing articles such as boots and shoes and engage themselves in tailoring their uniforms. In this way they will reduce the burden on society.

If our country is to progress it is necessary to promote the occupations of the masses. Production of more goods is not the only solution. Various other considerations, such as the ones we have pointed out above, will have to be brought into the equation to solve our problem. We trust those who have been entrusted with this task will proceed with their efforts with the background of conditions prevailing in our land and not run about from country to country trying to imitate what has been done to meet the situation prevalent elsewhere.

November 1950 *Gram Udyog Patrika*

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A MUCH NEEDED ADVICE

As a carryover from British Imperialism we still have an illogical demand for foreign imprimatur even in matters in which intimate knowledge of the people and their environment is called for as in economics. We can grant that in any technique that foreigners may have developed, expert advice of those skilled in that special line may be indented for. It takes time to outlive inferiority complex—a child of Imperialism.

The services of Mr. Collin Grant Clark, Financial Adviser to the Treasury, Government of Queensland (Australia) were obtained to advise on industrial planning in our country. He observed :—

"If I were an Indian Minister", I should say : "Have as much of your development in the form of cottage industry as possible. Regard the factory as a necessary evil".

This, of course, was not what was wanted, so he has been sent off with a "thank you".

By Sufferance :

The industries conference at New Delhi was only able to think of cottage industries as deserving patronage in so far as large scale industries wanted their help in repairs etc. Cottage industries would be allowed to live by sufferance. We have yet to realise that the position

is just the reverse. We may resort to large scale industries only where village industries call for them. They are allowed to exist as necessary evils to cater to the needs of the industries of the people. If the blacksmith wants steel for cart tyres, the steel mills will have to provide the material. Village industries are the staple food of the masses while large scale industries are poisons that are sometimes used as drugs. We cannot live on morphia and quinine "laddus" but these latter may be used in strictly limited doses when the condition of the patient needs them.

Which Power ?

The industrialists are full of schemes to harness power, to produce more and more. To do this they want the government to help in securing congenial circumstances and for obtaining machinery worth crores from abroad. They are thoroughly oblivious of the fact that millions of engines are standing idle at our doors unused. These have to have fuel whether they are used or not. Every human being is an engine that demands work and has to be kept alive by being fed. Is it better economy to use this engine or to leave it idle while feeding it all the while and at the same time importing mechanical devices to do the work ? It does not require much business acumen to answer this question. Yet, the best of our men are guilty of taking the wrong decision. We can understand self-centred businessmen wanting to make profit for themselves by the use of machinery while the nation has to bear the burden of supporting the lives of millions of unemployed and underemployed.

Unfortunately, recent public speeches of our Ministers show that even our public men are carried away by the vociferious industrialists.

Consumption

One of the most important functions of the Government in supporting village industries is practically forgotten. Government has to consume such articles as villagers make. The bulk of Government finance and power is derived from the masses and so it is but bare justice that these must be returned to givers. The Stores and Supply department has to fall in line with the production policy of Government.

Wanted a Policy

The need of the moment is not hydro-electric schemes calling for astronomical calculations to determine their cost but the production of food, clothing and shelter for the masses. Government should focus all its resources on these. Governmental powers and their finances should be hypothecated to this end. To use these powers vested in them to help the industrialist is betrayal of trust. Shri G. D. Birla's call to the Government to definitely declare their policy is not a moment too late. The people want to know whether they are entities in themselves or are mere pawns in the game of industrialization.

Addressing the Associated Chambers of Commerce at Calcutta, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared his policy which we hope will be implemented by the Government of which he is the head. He asked "What opportunity

for growth is there today for the vast number of Indians, whether they work in the fields or elsewhere ? I entirely agree that the peasants and ryots must have their first claim on us ". Our present struggle, he pointed out, was for the economic well being of the masses. He said, " The first thing to be considered was the good of the masses. Every thing should be judged from that standard". May we hope that this criterion will rule Governmental action in all the schemes that are now before the country ? These are crucial days. A government based on democracy must justify its existence by the service it renders to the people and not by the number of millionaires its policy creates.

January 1948. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

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SELF — SUFFICIENCY

At a conference of the Youth Christian Council of Action at Manganam, Kottayam, Travancore, I was asked as to how to make Travancore self-sufficient. In reply I stated "self-sufficiency" does not mean that each individual will be producing everything, that he needs. There are certain things which the individual himself can produce. There are certain other things which it may be impossible for the individual to produce, but his neighbours may supply these. Others still may have to be obtained by exchange of surplus articles in the locality. We may have still more goods to be exchanged with

neighbouring localities or regions, and yet have further needs to be supplied from farther off regions. For instance, a farmer may produce foodgrains, but may not be able to have oil for cooking. This he will exchange with his surplus grains. The farmer may not be able to produce the pots that he requires. For this, he will give some grains in exchange to the local potter and obtain his wares. If he needs woollen articles, which are not made in the locality, he may have to get these from the surrounding regions. Thus we see that self-sufficiency is a relative term as applied to commodities and individuals. Self-sufficiency will require us to reduce transport to a minimum and forego articles which cannot be made in the immediate neighbourhood. It does not limit the supply of goods only to such as a person can make for himself.

When interpreted in this way the self-sufficiency of a State would have to take into consideration the resources of the State, its topography and climatic conditions. We cannot grow cotton in regions where soil is not suitable. We cannot attempt to grow rice on rock. We must take full advantage of the lay out of the country and produce all that we can and increase such production. Commodities that cannot be produced should be exchanged for surplus goods.

Travancore has its own peculiarities. It is bounded on the one side by high mountain ranges and on the other side by lagoons and the sea. The little trip of land between these two is traversed by mountain rapids. The soil itself has been eroded. The rain fall is high. In

parts the population is said to reach about 1500 per square mile. Thus it is a very difficult task to grow sufficient food grains to maintain the population. It is said that this State produces only about a third of the food grains it requires. This need not be matter to despair over, as Travancore is rich in many other respects. The apparent disadvantages that Travancore has can be converted into blessings. While we must increase such food stuffs as we have, and grow others in addition, it is not necessary for us to aim at full sufficiency in food grains, especially, if it is found that it is impossible of fulfilment or only capable of attaining self-sufficiency at heavy losses in other directions. The land available is said to be about 30 cents per head. Therefore even if we can double the production it would still mean cutting down forests and clearing other vegetation for the purposes of acquiring fresh land. Such a programme will be deterimental to the climatic conditions of Travancore. The rain fall will be seriously affected and erosion may be increased considerably, There is already an unconscionable amount of denudation of forests and it will be criminal now to clear any more forests for cultivation.

This being so, under the existing circumstances, we have to seek a way out which will make Travancore self-sufficient in primary needs. The high ranges can easily provide small head reservoirs from which comparatively inexpensive generating stations may be erected to produce electricity. This power can be carried across the land with very little transmission cost as the lines will be short. If the land is studded with such diminutive generating stations, cheap electricity can be supplied to

small industries within an investment of one or two thousand rupees each. These can be used for producing, in cottages, articles of everyday use in the locality and for the surrounding regions. Such power may also help in grinding flour, making paper pulp, providing motive force for small industries run on lathes. The people of the State are industrious and intelligent. They have the advantage of dexterity of fingers as their beautiful carvings of sandal wood and ivory bear out. Such people can be trained to become skillful artisans to turn out watches, timepieces, fountain pens, pencils, leather goods, paper making and other articles of everyday use. The plentiful supply of water from the waterheads can also be utilized for purposes of tanning. These industries will be in addition to those which are already being followed.

A variegated economy built on the base of agriculture can well maintain a population of this density. To attempt to make such thickly populated area to depend on agriculture may not be successful. To give Travancore a variegated economy does not depart from the ideals of self-sufficiency. What excess and surplus is produced in these cottage industries can be exchanged from the neighbouring districts for grains and other requirements of food. It is thus that we should attempt to make our districts, states and country self-sufficient and not cramp them into narrow mould into which the natural setting of the country would make it impossible to fit in.

June 1950.

Gram Udyog Patrika

PLANNING BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

PART—VI

GENERAL

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SWARAJ POLITICS

Values dictated by belligerent conditions differ from those demanded by peace. To a soldier a rock affords a hiding place and a shelter from enemy fire, a hill side will enable him to cover his enemy from advantageous heights. But to a farmer a rock is much unproductive surface, hindering his furrows running straight. He wants no hiding place nor a sloping fields. His purpose is not waging war but production to supply his needs. He wants his soft soil to be open to sun and rain and the surface flat enough to retain sufficient moisture. Such is the case also in the field of politics.

While we were fighting British Imperialism we had recourse to certain strategy. In personnel the city people had definite advantages. The lawyers, physicians, professors and students presented a formidable front which looked impregnable. They needed little or no time in preparation for the wordy warfare on the platform and for the onslaughts on the evils of British Imperialism and to decry the exploitation of the masses. Hence such men were recruited in large numbers and given a short training in group discipline through congenial mass drill under the Charkha programme. To what extent all this proved successful history has now recorded in the inauguration of the Indian Republic.

We have now turned the corner and a new situation faces us. Our problem is not to turn out a foreign imperialism but to build up, out of a culturally disintegrated population with a history of several centuries of slavery, a self-respecting nation which will pull its weight in the council of nations or the betterment of humanity and the advancement of civilization.

The personnel for this programme will differ according to the work to be done by them. We have now adult franchise. Every head counts and largest number of them are in the villages. Therefore our field of political labours has to be shifted to the rural areas. The subject matter to be dealt with is not British Imperial history but the vital problems facing the villagers. Hence the present day politician, to be effective, must be well versed in rural life and should be able to present a scheme of rural development that will satisfy the villagers and bring them economic and social relief. For these purposes who should be better qualified than the villager himself?

Unfortunately, these differences in the political field before and after Swaraj were not appreciated and the soldiers, who fought the British Imperialist, were left in the saddle, with the effect that their notions do not help in any way to solve today's problems. Therefore, what is needed is not a wordy manifesto or flowery political ideals, but a grip of the rural life and its needs.

To this end those who would interest themselves in politics should burn their boats and settle in villages, indentify themselves with the villages and take up rural problems as their own and thoroughly understand the

situation, gain the confidence of the villagers and work up the democratic organization from below. Agriculture being the principal occupation in the village, politicians should take it up or be closely associated with it.

The days when the "White collared" gentry could dabble in politics are gone. The times have changed and demand different tactics.

The Congress has failed to show any adaptability to the difference in the environment and circumstances and is not responsive to public opinion. Hence its days are numbered. If any other body wishes to serve the nation it should formulate its programme to suit the present environment. It should go to the villages, abandon the Delhi mentality and accept the rural way of approach to the problems facing us. Power politics can serve us no longer. What we need is an approach through service. The village voter has to be educated to appreciate the change in his own status and responsibility and be shown the way to discharge his duties properly. Hobnobing with city life will not help matters.

We trust those who are contemplating a change of political allegiance, will keep these fundamental truths in view and act accordingly. Only that way we can implement the practical aspect of life under real Swaraj. Without this, political work will be a mere game of chance and not worth the candle.

Gram Udyog Patrika

July 1951.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The Community Projects Administration of the Planning Commission of the Government of India has put out a draft outline on the scheme. The information supplied by this brochure is so scanty that no detailed study can be made of the plans. However, certain broad based observations on the projects can be offered.

The Indo-U. S. Technical Cooperation Agreement, signed by our Prime Minister and the U. S. Ambassador, is unworthy of any self respecting, independent country, as it confers diplomatic immunity to private foreign citizens working in our country. This helps to create foreign pockets in our land.

In all international relations independent countries generally reciprocate the treatment given to their citizens. The U. S. A. does not even admit our nationals into their land except on a very small quota basis as we are Asiatics. Yet we extend to their so called technicians even diplomatic immunity which is an unheard of privilege. Why this falling at their feet ? What is the "knowhow" they possess of this work other than driving tractors ? Why is this special treatment accorded ? Has the U. S. A. no faith in the power of our administration to protect their nationals ? Are we so corrupt or barbarious ?.

While the U. S. A. contributes only about 2 annas in the rupee, it is given a controlling voice in the affairs of the Community Projects. Why should we receive in

two annas on bended knees ? If we have no funds to cover 55 projects why not cut down the scheme by one eighth, make it 48 projects only and maintain our self-respect ? It will make hardly any difference, while it will add to our self–help and experience. The whole scheme reflects an amazing lack of confidence on the part of the Prime Minister in the ability of his colleagues that he should bow so low to invite foreigners to rebuild the countryside. It is dangerous to hand over parts of the country to be experimented upon by foreigners. If the country is so bankrupt of capacity to solve its problems and rebuild the nation, it confesses its unfitness for Swaraj.

Any such programme necessarily involves an intimate knowledge of the human element as an important factor in the education. This scheme completely ignores this essential consideration. The whole scheme is built upon an idea that a knowledge of machine working is all that is necessary to govern a people. Those who are responsible for this plan have left out any need for human psychology. The Americans know no more about us than we do of the Eskimos. What then is their qualification to teach us ?

Our rural life is based on a social philosophy and a way of life to promote self-government and self-sufficiency. Unless we rebuild on this basis our efforts will not only be in vain, but will lead to the disruption of our society and culture. Are we merely building up a factory to produce goods that perish in time or are we aiming at educating and building up a nation with a cultural background ? If it is the latter the Americans are thoroughly unqualified for the job entrusted to them by our Prime Minister.

The scheme seems to byepass the fundamental rural question—Land Reform. Hence it is futile. Land reform means restoring the land to the Community to be used for the general benefit of the Community. This was the basis of our village republics. The Americans look upon land as an instrument to produce commercial goods. This latter approach leads to competition and conflict. Even in the U. S. A. excessive exploitation of land is leading to its exhaustion.

No regional self-sufficiency in food on a balanced diet basis is contemplated. Hence the danger of famines cannot be averted. We need to study the consumption pattern of the people. A pattern based on a philosophy of multiplicity of wants will not serve India nor bring peace to the world.

This is part of the American cordon attempted to be laid to encompass Russia, from Korea to West Germany. Therefore, India is being led the way Korea has gone. There is danger in falling a prey to the American bloc. So those of us, who are committed to non-violence, cannot be associated with this scheme. Whatever little is being spent by the U. S. A. on this project is as nothing when we realize that this is part of the American war effort. What is a petty 8 million dollars when looked at from this context of preparing embattlements on the wideflung Russian front ? We shall be guilty of lending a hand in preparing for a global war if we cooperate in this project.

Generally my fear is that this is the thin end of the wedge of the era of American Financial Imperialism

striving to fill in the vacuum created by an inefficient administration on the wake of the departure of British Political Imperialism. For this reason I hold that those who co-operate in this scheme are as Quislings who work with the enemies of their country and bring about the destruction of their own land. The graveness of the situation calls for brutal frankness.

September 1952 *Gram Udyog Patrika.*

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OUR GUIDES

It is over a year that the new developmental schemes and community projects have been in operation. I have been repeatedly asked what my views are now in regard to these in the light of actual practice. Friends know that I have been very strongly opposed to these schemes from the very beginning, viewing them from political and economic stand points. I wish now to place my views in the light of experience.

What is Development ?

We call these "developmental schemes" but we rarely know what we mean by "development". Is the mere outward appearance in the using of lip-stick developing womanhood ? Or is the habit of smoking the development of manhood ? If we use the term development to denote such superficial condition, then these schemes, we are now considering, may be rightly called "development". Some of us attribute to this term a deeper meaning with

an everlasting goal. In the context of the present world conditions any attempted development must work towards bringing about world peace. Gandhiji's constructive programmes were all directed towards development of a non-violent society leading to all human life being lived under peaceful conditions. But the present life, even in a city like Delhi, has been described by Jawaharlalji himself as the life of a jungle. This means an unplanned and uncoordinated purposeless living. This can be applied to our present project schemes.

Our Needs

Our projects have to be scientific in the sense that the needs of our people and the resources at our disposal should be co-ordinated with restrictions under which nature has placed us. We require an all round consideration if we wish to have our developments follow on lines obtaining in India. Under the prevailing conditions India needs great frugality and a well co-ordinated cyclic order which will take advantage of every ounce of effort put out by us.

Our culture and traditions have followed these lines. Our immediate requirements are small tanks and wells for irrigation, canals for retaining and distributing the water supply and also for providing transport, as in our vast country long distance cannot be conquered by power supplied by petroleum which is not a national product. Therefore, India in the past had developed on the basis of self-sufficiency which alone will guarantee peace. In India agriculture has been carried on for purposes of nutritional needs of the people and has been developed as an occupation if not as a way of life itself.

Our ways

Our method has been a co-ordinated cycle of the earth, animal, and man and our needs were produced by these means and with such industries as we had, based on these foundations for processing and finishing the products. For instance when the earth yields her corn bountifully, we eat the grain, the animal eats the leaves and the stalks and we and the animals return to the earth our refuse in the form of manure to start the cycle all over again. If we build a road, we sink along with it a well or dig a tank to provide the road material. Thus our plans are well co-ordinated. On the other hand, when a tractor, run on crude oil, is used there is no complimentary cycle. The waste gases go into the air to pollute it. The tractor is not connected organically with the earth or with man. It stands apart. This is patch work and does not form a cycle. Similarly, our conception of Dharma relates us to the animal kingdom and to vegetation and to the soil. This brings in consi- derations of moral values in our every day dealing. Bereft of such relation and holding to material consi- derations only, man in America stands as an outside exploiter of the rest of his fellow creatures, sentient or otherwise. Therefore our present developmental plan to be assimilated has to be in our traditional lines and has to follow these lines.

Our Instructors

Unfortunately, we have brought in as our guides, persons who are completely foreign to the qualifications we have indicated above. America is almost diametrically

the opposite of India in its environmental conditions. Hence the people, culturally and traditionally, have developed methods and a way of life which are antagonistic to our needs. While we require frugality, American methods are extravagent, while we need well co-ordinated cyclic order, American methods follow the patch work. America looks upon agriculture as an industry to exploit the wealth of the soil. They can use tractors, artificial manure etc., as the methods are intended to follow a short term policy. Agriculture with them is like any other industry linked on to commerce as a wealth producer. It seeks outside markets and follows the ruthless principles of foreign trade. Hence to bring people who have been brought up on totally different conditions and entrust them with a mission which is foreign to them and to our nature, is not to do justice either to their qualifications or to our cause. They cannot think in terms of the poor people. Like queen Antoinette of France, they will ask our people to eat cake if they have no bread. Even a distinguished experienced constructive worker like Dr. A. E. Morgan, the ex-chairman of the T. V. A., advises us to use aeroplanes to go from village to village rather than make roads for bullock-carts! We cannot bring the two cultures of India and America together without causing violence to both. To bring American guides to India is to guarantee failure in the long run. We cannot bring a rich man's heir to associate closely with a poor man's son without injuring both. India needs ways which depend on self-control, renunciation and simplicity while the American ways are indulgent, wasteful and based on a multiplicity of wants

and self-centredness. These differences stand out prominently in the project schemes in which the Americans have had a leading hand.

Their Example

Such American guides live in the most luxurious style and import from their own country all their requirements including food. They house themselves in air conditioned buildings with "deep freeze" equipment which is considered the height of luxury even in luxurious America. So whatever goodwill there may be behind the efforts, I fear these will lead to no purpose, as their ways and our ways are poles apart. It is not possible in this short note to give examples of the extravagant ways of the Americans which they have followed in the past in building up their own country, how they have burnt forests and built roads and wasted their lands with short term agricultural methods and passed on from place to place to seek pastures new. It is impossible for us to use such persons as our guides and yet hope to succeed ! Hence it seems to me, we are launching on the greatest blunder when we turn for guidance towards America for our developmental schemes. The little experience we have had, strongly endorses this opinion. The sooner India turns to her own genius and relies on her own strength and resources for development, the better it will be for herself and her message of peace to the world.

December 1953. *Gram Udyog Patrika*

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A RUDDERLESS SHIPPING PROGRAMME

Indian Shipping had been blasted out of existence by British interest in the last century or so. In the past few decades, thanks to private enterprise, a few boats have been picked up from the Junk of leading shipping nations and salvaged into a "Mercantile Marine" for India. When we look at the needs of India's foreign trade if it needed an ocean going liner, we are at present, the proud possessors of only a single man canoe! At this stage when India needs millions of tonnage the Commerce Minister brings forward a scheme for three corporations of 100,000 tons. Instead of a charger fit for an well armoured knight he presents a knock-kneed donkey!

Even this scheme displays a lack of thought or appreciation of organisation needed. Basically, one may say, it displays no well-conceived idea of the future of Indian Shipping. The plan is Government participation in the shareholding of the corporations. The public as well as shipping companies can hold shares. The management is by agencies but how the policies will be controlled, if at all, is not clear. Even the method of working envisaged is foggy. The six-point outline given is delightfully vague and confused leaving the reader no wiser than he was. We feel all this beating about the bush is due to not having a single minded national policy and trying to combine and compromise all types of incompatible interests.

The Government has to settle its economic policy first and foremost. Then in relation to it, its foreign trade policy will become well defined. After that the policy in regard to shipping will naturally fall into its own sphere. When we have a clearly laid out programme for all Key industries, we shall know how this shipping will be conducted–under monopolies, competition, nationalisation or State control. This will open the way also to the methods of finding the needed finance.

At this stage this question needs to be handled with care, deep thought and tact, as we are up against powerful foreign combines. No haphazard scheme will meet the situation. Shipping being one of the life lines of a nation's economic activity, we hope the Government will bestow careful thought and attention on the building up of this vital service to the nation. Even in drafting a workable scheme the Government will be well advised to take into confidence the various interests affected by this industry and in consultations with them attempt to solve this problem.

Gram Udyog Patrika.

January 1948.

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